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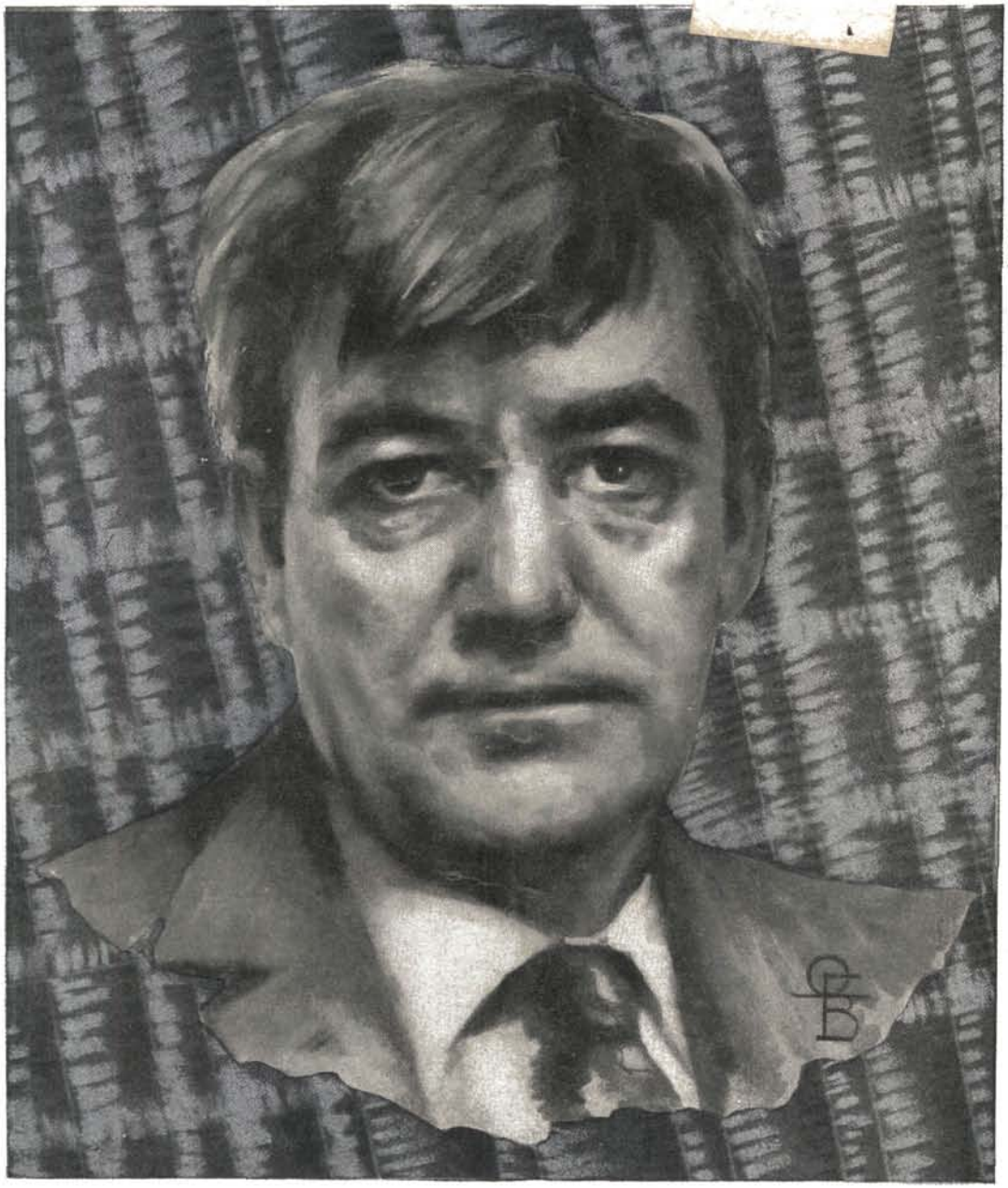

*Sherwood Anderson "could write well only when he was writing to please himself."* (See page 6)

# *My Brother, Sherwood Anderson*

By KARL JAMES ANDERSON

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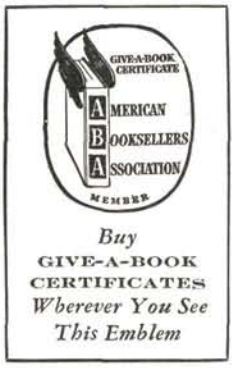


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*September 4, 1948*

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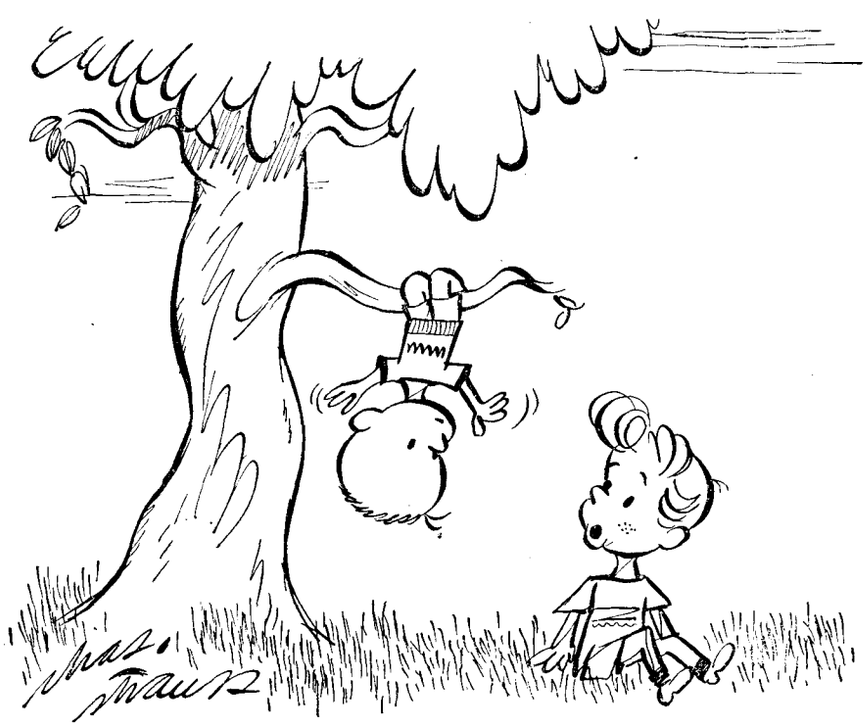
# TRADE Winds

**UNAVOIDABLE AS TIDES** or taxes are the semi-annual sales conferences of leading publishing houses — solemn rites in which the sales managers are high priests, and editors, peddlers, and publicists make offerings in the form of bloated sales estimates, imaginary advertising budgets, and ecstatic blurbs for novels not yet delivered. Editors and unreluctant authors declare, "We won't take time to tell you the plot." A half-hour later they're still telling it. Partners stop doodling long enough to murmur, "Greatest book that ever bore our imprint," or "We expect an advance of at least fifty thousand on this one," or "We signed up this plum right under Doubleday's and Macmillan's noses. Wait till they hear it's an 'A' book at the BOMC!" Blase salesmen, happy at least for a trip to New York at the firm's expense, ask the questions they feel are expected of them, approve jackets that will be discarded later, and wonder if the new blonde receptionist is as receptive as she looks. Three days later, everybody goes back to work.

Lew Miller, of Random House, is one sales manager who believes in special effects to keep his audience on the qui vive. His presentations have included the use of colored balloons, firecrackers, live mice, magic coins, and a pin-headed geek from a Coney Island side show. He had a baby boa-constrictor lined up for a memorable introduction of "The Snake Pit," but desisted when his whole secretarial staff threatened to resign. This year, with a book called "See Without Glassees," Miller surpassed himself.

He began his harangue wearing a pair of antiquated spectacles redeemed for a pittance from a nearby hock shop. The sales force, hardened to his didoes, scarcely stirred. One man hazarded a guess that he had strained his eyes years ago looking for a confirmation from a Mr. Pitman of Jordan Marsh. "I was resigned to wearing these spectacles for the rest of my life," began Miller, with a sob in his voice. "Then, gentlemen, I read the manuscript of 'See Without Glasses'!" With this he tore off the spectacles, planked them on the desk in front of him, and reached back for a gavel concealed in a pile of lay-outs, dummies, and photographs of S. J. Perelman. While he was groping, Robert K. Haas entered the room, sat down in the chair next to Miller, and innocently laid his fifty-dollar bifocals on the table.

Just then Miller found the gavel, and swung into action. Pieces of bifocals flew as far as Cardinal Spellman's study on the other side of Madison Avenue. Strong men wept. The sales conference was adjourned for two hours. Through it all Mr. Haas preserved an icy calm, and later proved a typical Yale sportsman and scholar. He's letting Miller pay for the bifocals on the instalment plan.



**"What are you going to be in the Army when you grow up?"**

**READERS OF TRADE WINDS** have taken kindly to Bertrand Russell's new game of conjugating (ah there, Joe Jackson!) irregular verbs. Here are a few submitted to date:

From Whitney Darrow: "I am a publisher. You are a publisher. He can't read either." (!!!)

From Hugh B. Scott: "I love life. Aren't you rather burning the candle at both ends, old man? He's a dissipated wreck."

From George Tener: "I slave. You keep yourself occupied. He has an excellent secretary."

From Barbara Hoefeld: "I like the opposite sex. You go for anything in a pair of pants. She'll need a whole chapter to herself in the next Kinsey report."

From Pamela Harnett: "I like gaiety. You are boisterous. He is a roughneck."

From Ina Vestal: "I look young. You are well-preserved. She must have had her face lifted."

From E. M. Davenport: "I dine innocently with my friend's husband. You run the risk of being talked about. She carries on with every married man in town."

From J. Whitington: "I am stimulated by talking to successful people. You are a celebrity chaser. He is a snob."

From D. Hendee: "I am a delightful raconteur. You are a trifle garrulous. He is a deadly bore."

From Norman Jaffray: "I am careless. You are slovenly. He proofreads the *SRL*." (Ouch!)

From Baynard Kendrick: "I am a careful historian. You are a good researcher. He is a dirty plagiarist."

Writes Peterina Bowker: "Bertrand Russell's game brings to mind a list of paradoxical phrases being compiled by Katherine Anne Porter. At the Kansas Writers Conference she invited additions to her collection of



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phrases which contradict themselves and which, nevertheless, have been accepted and used glibly by many of us for years. A few, for example, are:

Light housekeeping
Free love
Honest prejudice
Civilized warfare."

Further nominations are now in order! . . .

**NATHAN AUSUBEL's** "Treasury of Jewish Folklore" (Crown), contains over 700 pages of typical Jewish humor, legends, and folk songs—in fact, everything but the shammes's stove, and is proving highly popular throughout the nation. Its most thrilling pages, in my opinion, are devoted to a retelling of the forty-two-day battle of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. Of the hundreds of funny stories included, many, of course, will be familiar to addicts, but Ausubel has come up with a lot of salty new ones, too.

I liked the anecdote of the famous preacher of Dubno whose driver stopped en route to a lecture date and said, "Rabbi, do me a favor. For once I'd like to be the one receiving all the honors and attentions to see what it feels like. For this one engagement, change clothes with me, you be the driver, and let me be the rabbi."

The preacher, a merry and generous soul, laughed and said, "All right—*but remember, clothes don't make* the rabbi. If you're asked to explain some difficult passage of the Law, see that you don't make a fool of yourself."

The exchange was effected. Arrived at their destination, the bogus rabbi was received with tumultuous enthusiasm, and obviously loved every minute of it. Finally, however, there came the dreaded moment when an extremely tricky question was put to him.

He met the test nobly. "A fine lot of scholars you are," he thundered. "Is this the most difficult problem you could ask me? Why, this is so simple even my driver could explain it to you."

Then he called the Preacher of Dubno: "Driver, come here for a moment and clarify the Law for these dull-witted fellows." . . .

Another Ausubel story concerns a merchant from Chelm who drove to a neighboring town and was asked by a prospective customer, "What are you selling today?" The merchant whispered in his ear, "Oats." "Why the secrecy?" demanded the customer. "S-s-sh," soothed the merchant. "Not so loud. I don't want the horse to hear." . . . Then there was the case of Friedman, haggard from persistent insomnia. "Count sheep," advised his partner. "It's the best-known cure." "What can I lose?" sighed Friedman dubiously. "I'll try tonight." The next morning he looked more bleary-eyed than ever. "Sheep I should count," he mocked his partner. "I counted up to 50,000. Then I sheared the sheep and made up 50,000 overcoats. Then came the problem that kept me awake all the rest of the night: *Where could I get* 50,000 *linings?*" . . .

**IT IS EASY** to understand why the above stories brought to mind "Gentleman's Agreement," and that in turn recalled an episode described by Gilbert Seldes. In the lobby of a theatre that was showing the Academy Award picture, a lady stood buttoning her coat, obviously deeply impressed with the lesson of her evening's entertainment. Just then a colored couple walked into the theatre. The usher took their ticket stubs and said in a bored voice, "Upstairs." The lady sprang into action. She seized the usher by the arm and demanded, "What do you mean by ordering those people upstairs?" The usher answered, "What would you have done, lady? They have loge seats."

BENNETT CERF.


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*The Saturday Review of Literature*

# *My Brother, Sherwood Anderson*

KARL JAMES ANDERSON

IN this essay I shall attempt to give a picture of my brother, Sherwood Anderson, the natural storyteller, who by instinct built his tales with words of Biblical simplicity. As I begin I wonder: Can I put aside my long pride in my younger brother's accomplishment? Can I separate my impressions of one who shared my youth from my attitude toward the established author he later became? Should I, a painter, essay writing about *this* writer?

I was not quite three years old when Sherwood was born, on September 13, 1877, in a modest, two-family house in the small town of Camden, O. Our father, Irving Anderson, was a harness maker and saddler, and the family moved about from one Ohio town to another, surrounded by the odor of leather and the hope of prosperity; one never left us and the other never came. Most of Sherwood's boyhood and mine, though, were spent in Clyde, a town of about 2,500 in the north-central section of the state and the hub of a cabbage-growing district.

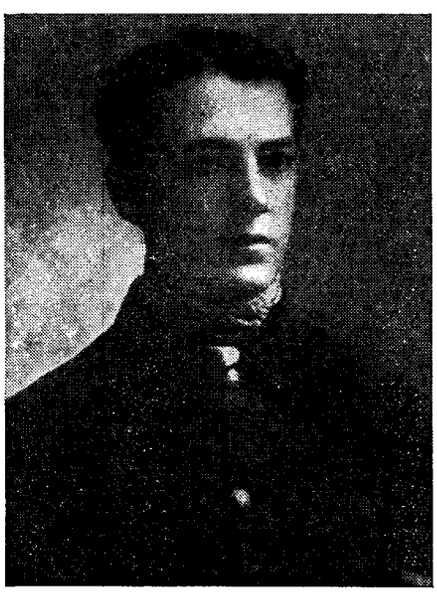
The only abundance in our home, on Piety Hill—at the end of a straggling street that started pretentiously at Main Street and trailed away in a patch of weeds—was the ever-increasing number of children; their births came almost yearly until they numbered the magical seven.

In an environment tightly gnarled, among unimaginative folk, dependent upon agriculture for a living, it may appear surprising that the Anderson children should early have shown something of the fire of the poets; something also that could evaporate. I, the oldest, took up painting. Stella, who later became an occasional contributor to religious publications, was a year younger than myself. Next came Sherwood, then Irving, who had a youthful inclination to be an artist but became a businessman, then Raymond, who took up newspaper work, and Earl, who studied art in Paris. The youngest child, named Fern, died in infancy.

Sherwood, the exuberant one, was known as "the go-getter." He wanted to get on in the world. On Saturday afternoons he was on the streets selling the weekend edition of the *Cincinnati Enquirer,* a mishmash of news, scandal, adventure, and romance, to the farmers who came in town to do their shopping, and he was proud that he could sell more copies of the paper than any other boy in town. Once he boasted of his persuasiveness in inducing a farmer, in a barroom, to buy more than one copy of the *Enquirer.*

There was not a good library, public or private, in Clyde, with the possible exception of the schoolmaster's. There were but few books in our own home; I can remember only "Pilgrim's Progress" and Tennyson's "Poems," and these chiefly for their fine illustrations. Sherwood, though, had the enterprise to borrow books; he was a great reader. However, I doubt that his preference was ever for the classics.

At school, Sherwood took no honors, but he was an effortless student. One day the principal of the school, the one man in town who owned books, a patriarch with a long, white beard, invited Sherwood and me to his house to discuss our futures. He appeared more interested in Sherwood than in me, and offered to try to get him a scholarship if he was interested in going to college. But Sherwood was somehow in a hurry for life, and he shrugged the idea off.



**"From wheeling meat in and out of frigid vaults Sherwood Anderson escaped with light heart to the Spanish war."**

WHILE attending school I had been apprenticed to a harness maker, for my father was insistent that I have a trade, and naturally favored his own. But I had other ideas: during my eighteenth year I left home to study at the Art Institute in Chicago. In later years Sherwood placed the blame for his having gone off to be a writer at my feet. "Your going off to study art," he said, "that set a bad example for me." I had been boarding with a family on the West Side of Chicago for about two years when Sherwood followed me there to share my room. He was nineteen then, a callow youth of medium height. At once he captured the hearts of the family with whom we were staying by his good-natured assurance. He told everyone on the day of his arrival that he would first get a job as a grocery clerk, and then progress upwards in a short space of time.

The following evening, Sherwood appeared at dinner with the exalted announcement that he, that day, had landed ten grocery jobs. "I'm to go to work at one of them tomorrow morning," he told us. I haven't made up my mind which one. I'll flip a coin. See which fellow is to have my services."

As it turned out, Sherwood did not take any of the ten positions. A girl who happened to be visiting at the house that night was so impressed by his self-confidence that she took him to her father, the owner of a large cold-storage plant. Sherwood spent the next two years wheeling meat in and out of frigid vaults.

From this labor Sherwood escaped



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—Peter Stackpole, Life Staff

**"My Brothers, Earl, Sherwood, Irving," by Karl Anderson.—Sherwood was fond of saying, "I am the most talked about, unread, unbought author in America."**

with light heart to go to the Spanish war. He wrote me in New York, where I had gone, and said, "I prefer yellow fever in Cuba to living in cold storage in Chicago." A girl Sherwood had written in Clyde told the town that he was planning to come home to enlist in the local militia, and Clyde's citizenry gave him a demonstration for which he was not prepared. The people were at the depot with a band to greet a patriot, a rudimentary hero. "Me, just to duck a rotten job, being made a fuss over—it was doggone embarrassing!" was the way he put it to me afterwards.

Sherwood was in Cuba one year. He arrived there too late for the fighting and was detailed to police duty. Soon after he was mustered out of the Army, he came to me at Springfield, O., where I was then employed as the resident artist for *Woman's Home Companion*. He was very thin, all skin and bones, and I could see that something was troubling him. Finally he confessed that he was in doubt about his future, and that he felt he should have a better education.

At the time I was boarding at "The Oaks," an establishment run by a Mrs. Folger, within strolling distance of Wittenberg College. Several Wittenberg professors lived at "The Oaks," and one of them became interested in Sherwood. Sherwood had attended high school at Clyde, but had never graduated, so it took a little doing on the part of the professor to prepare him to matriculate. Sherwood shared a room with me for two years, until I went to Europe to study art and visit the galleries.

In searching back in my mind now, I am inclined to believe that Sherwood's stay at "The Oaks" had no little to do with his deciding to become a writer. For the first time he was with people of quickened mentality who extended their interest beyond his mere geniality. With two of the friends he made—a teacher and a newspaperman—he corresponded regularly for many years.

During the next two years, while I was in Europe, a blank space existed in our intimate brotherhood. I returned to the United States and Chicago and Sherwood in 1902. Our mother had died. A year afterwards our father married again; I never afterwards saw him. The other members of the family had moved to Chicago, where Sherwood was now working as a copywriter for an advertising agency.

ONE night, in the darkness of his apartment on the South Side, not far from the University of Chicago campus, Sherwood told me the story of his breakdown. He said he had left his first advertising job in Chicago to take charge of a failing mail-order business in Cleveland, with the understanding that he would receive an interest in the business if he put it on its feet again. By hard work he had increased the business 400 per cent, but the owners reneged on their agreement. He told me also of his marriage to a girl of much erudition, a former student at the Sorbonne.

From Cleveland Sherwood had gone to Elyria, O., to start a factory making housepaint. Here he wrote some semi-autobiographical sketches which he had printed up in pamphlet form and distributed as advertisements. But his wife gave scant approval to his attempts at writing, he told me, because she felt him so poorly educated. He became so starved for intellectual companionship that he made a place in the business for Earl, our younger brother, simply so that on long walks in the evenings they might talk about writing and Earl could introduce to his mind unknown poets and novelists. He said the desire grew in him to write a story of his own, and he fixed an enclosure in his attic to be alone to write. After long hours in his office every day, he went to this boxed room and wrote deep into the nights upon a novel. He there wrote "Windy McPherson's Son."

Now he came to the part of his story that was at variance from the account he later wrote. According to his writings, one day he suddenly walked out of his factory in such a way as deliberately to give the impression that he had lost his mind. Some critics have interpreted it as an act of brave escapism, a preconceived way of throwing aside the shackles of domesticity and business.

But as Sherwood told me about it that night, reluctantly, as one who would suppress even a recollection of his past weariness, there was nothing deliberate in the act. "I rose from my desk and walked through a door and beyond that door I have no remembrance. My mind was a blank until I found myself in a ward of a Cleveland hospital." A doctor told him he suffered from a loss of memory; said it was amnesia. The doctor advised him to take a rest and change his vocation. He rested several weeks, as long as he could afford such a luxury, then returned to Chicago and advertising.

It is not for me to decide which version of the incident Sherwood preferred or how others shall interpret them. For myself, the memory of that moment of listening to a hushed voice coming to me in the darkness of night is far too compelling to be denied.

It so happened, during an exhibition I gave in Chicago some time later, about 1909, that a newspaperwoman came to see my paintings—the wife of Floyd Dell, the brilliant and dogmatic young critic who was then assistant literary editor of the *Chicago Evening Post*. As she left the gallery, she invited me to a Sunday evening supper at her home, and I dared to ask the privilege of bringing Sherwood along. Masking her uncertainty of an unknown brother, she uttered a too declamatory, "Yes indeed!"

(*Continued on page* 26)



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**Fiction.** *The efforts of worried observers of the battle of books to find a coherent pattern for the modern novel are relentlessly stifled by the diversity in scenery and subject revealed every week. Aside from the war and that recently omnipotent theme racial discrimination, there is as little unity to be found among the latest novels as in the words you dig up in a crossword puzzle. The locale of the several novels reviewed below, for example, range all the way from Illinois and New York to Ireland, Russia, Java, the air, and an undertaking establishment. This observation holds true also for the sixteen novels recently listed in newspapers as best sellers, with Mailer's "The Naked and the Dead" at the top, James M. Cain's "The Moth" at the bottom, and Pearl Buck's "Peony" sitting in the middle.*

# *A Colleen's Temptation to "Turn"*

*BRIDIE STEEN. By Anne Crone. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1948. 304 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM

HER name "Bridie" ("Brighid") with "Steen" shows this heroine's divergent origin: her paternal relatives are Protestant, non-Irish, and well-off while her maternal relatives are Catholic, natively Irish, and unprosperous. Because her grandmother has cast off the son who married a Catholic servant girl, Bridie is reared as a Catholic; then in her teens she is brought to what is for her a great Protestant house and becomes the object of her grandmother's dynastic ambition and remorseful affection. The elder woman implores her granddaughter "to turn," to become a Protestant, so that her six farms may not be alienated from their two-hundred-years' ownership by passing into Catholic hands. If she does this she will be at liberty to marry the Protestant cousin whom she loves. This cousin, William Henry, loves Bridie but cannot bring himself to marry a Catholic. And so Bridie is surrounded by the occasions for that sin which in Catholic Ireland is regarded as the least forgivable, the sin of apostasy.

"One of the great novels of our time," Lord Dunsany says of "Bridie Steen." I find it a novel that is significant and well-conceived with characters that live in the reader's mind after he has finished it and a landscape that is rendered with affectionate familiarity. Still, Anne Crone is a young woman and it has been given to only one or two in literary history to achieve a great novel in their thirties and a first novel at that. But one is glad that Lord Dunsany came out with that statement; it is over-enthusiastic, but in these days of cost calculation it has helped to get a fine novel published.

What are the characteristics of a great novel? To note a few of the more evident ones might be a way of opening a review of "Bridie Steen." I think a great novel has existence on several levels—a social level, say, and a spiritual level, a level of conduct, and a level of passion, or any two or three levels of behavior and aspiration that we care to think of. There should be high tensions: here and there a reader should be made to feel that this or that character has to summon up all his or her forces to win through. Certainly there are high tensions in "Bridie Steen" —the death of little Bridie's Uncle James, the confrontation when her grandmother demands that the young Catholic girl turn Protestant, the meeting with her lover in the rain when her grandmother is stricken, Bridie's refusal to let the priest see her, and her despair when she believes she has made herself guilty of apostasy. They are not sustained, however, as a more experienced novelist would have been able to sustain them; except for the last they resolve themselves too gently. And the story of Bridie Steen exists only on one level, the level of a young, isolated girl's griefs, exaltations, and terrors. Other characters are in the novel, but Bridie, her grandmother, and her lover are the only ones who have struggled, and the two last are absent from a good part of the book.

It is one of the virtues of her novel that Anne Crone dramatizes the recoil of the Protestant from a Catholic marriage. It issues from the fear, very prevalent in Northeast Ireland, of having house and farm pass into Catholic hands. That would be a racial humiliation, a step in the undoing of the "plantation," a retreat if only for the breadth of a few fields from the domination of Northeast Ireland. For, curiously enough, a community that has been in Ireland only for 200 years has a stronger sense of the hereditary than the Gaelic or the Anglo-Irish folk. The Gaelic folk since the seventeenth century have been too harried, too lacking in security, to have a strong sense of the hereditary, and the Anglo-Irish haven't rooted themselves in the country as farmers. In pointing to the prosperous farms of the Protestants in contrast to the meager holdings of the Catholics (though the contrast is not made explicit) and in showing the temper of a people who glory in being an "ascendency" but feel that "ascendency" has become insecure, Miss Crone indicates why there is a border between the six and the twenty-six counties of Ireland.

But if there is any such thesis it is not apparent in "Bridie Steen": what comes to us is a young girl's growth, expectation, anguish in a countryside of bog and lakeshore; the countryside is around Lough Erne and is memorably brought before us. Anne Crone knows that in that part of Ireland the relations between Protestant and Catholic families and individuals are kindly and helpful, and these as well as the irreconcilability between Prot-

**FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 272**

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 272 will be found in the next issue.*

GPCBKSKPFB ASDP

EPHPGPFSLPE. LAPX OSX

GTC WP SWBTMRLPMX

FPMZPE RKTG.

TBNSF CZMEP

***Answer to Literary Crypt No. 271***

Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct.

F. H. BRADLEY.



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estant and Catholic solidarities are faithfully portrayed. It marks her accomplishment as a novelist that her opposing human beings balance each other fairly: against the unbending Protestant grandmother, the fanatical Catholic aunt; the beloved Catholic Uncle James against the protective Protestant Jerem; the tyranny of the priest (taken for granted by Mrs. Steen, but he appears only once and then without any character) against the worldliness of the Reverend Alfred Archer. Bridie herself isn't much of a Catholic; given time and the sense of the hereditary that grows on her, she would, a reader feels, "turn" without any tragical consequence. She is without the interior life that one would expect an emotional young Catholic girl to have; she has no attachment to the Virgin and the saints, no response to the Mass, no solace in the chapel's evening devotions. She goes to confession, so she must see a priest, but the priest and Bridie seem to be strangers. What keeps her a Catholic is her dread of purgatory, and the one link with her religion that she holds is her rosary or "beads," and she keeps this as a sort of mascot. But if she had been more religious Anne Crone would have no story to tell: the irresistable force of Mrs. Steen's exclusions would have met the immovable obstacle of Bridie's sanctions. But it may be that Anne Crone is more subtle than this reading suggests and that she wants us to take Bridie as an elfin child on whom the imposition of any system would mean death.

# *Midwest Family Album, 1912*

*TIME WILL DARKEN IT. By William Maxwell. New York: Harper & Bros.* 1948. 302 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD MCLAUGHLIN

WILLIAM MAXWELL has chosen an Illinois town in the year 1912 as setting for his fourth distinguished novel. It is certain to induce many nostalgic sighs from mothers and fathers, and uncles and aunts, of the present war generation. And because Mr. Maxwell is sensitive and has sufficient restraint to recapture the tempo and mauve tints of those more tranquil days, even we, to whom that period can only be remotely appealing, cannot help but be caught up in the author's finely spun mood of nostalgia. If sometimes we feel the ironic tone in the book smothered, perhaps, by a too bittersweet ruefulness, Mr. Maxwell makes up for it by disclosing the poetry, the haunting sadness, and the myriad intimacies and subtle undertones which existed within the family circle when the horse-drawn surrey was still the fashionable conveyance of the day.

A novelist who is not content to show us the mere surface of urban lives, William Maxwell occasionally penetrates right to the core of human motives, unearthing tragedy or its drab counterpart—that tragicomic passivity with which folk too often will accept the harsh vicissitude of life. In a psychological novel we expect a deeper, more clinical probing into the frustrations and strained relationships between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters; but here such treatment only manages to produce deeper and uglier rents in the quiet, painstakingly woven fabric of Mr. Maxwell's tale of yesterday.

With bold realistic strokes of a painter who has concentrated a little too much on the landscape—because all he really is interested in is examining the effect that time's landscape has on the set of arbitrary figures he has drawn on his canvas—Mr. Maxwell restores a picture that should be familiar to many of us who have lived in towns like Draperville, Illinois, or have ever tried to imagine what the inhabitants were like who once dwelt on one of our elm-shaded streets when the century was considerably younger. And if we shut our eyes, we can visualize Mr. Maxwell's characters almost with no trouble at all. There in that house in the foreground are the tall, dignified, polite young lawyer Austin King and his pregnant wife, Martha, and their four-year-old daughter, Abbey, while in the background Rachel, the Negro cook, hovers about the kitchen stove. Next door we can see the indomitable Mrs. Beach and her two cowed, spinsterly daughters, Lucy and Alice. Farther down the street live: shy May Caroline Link, waiting in vain for some high-school Lochinvar to sweep her off her feet, Doctor and Mrs. Danforth, and the Ellis family. These are the friends, antagonists, and neighbors of Austin and Martha King, who look out on a kinder, gentler age from their front-porch rockers, relaxing in the summer's evening heat, listening to the children playing games, and watching the lightning bugs blinking in the night air.

—*Kirk Williamson.*

**William Maxwell may end the impression American towns in the early 1900's used to be "potential torture chambers."**

But suddenly as if a swarm of locusts or a flock of magpies had descended on this peaceful suburban scene, the Potters invade the privacy of Draperville's respectable homes. To Austin King, our well-meaning hero, the arrival of these foster relatives brings a realization of his own essential weakness in making decisions; above all, his inability to choose between the moonstruck, idealistic Nora Potter and his wife, whom he desperately loves but cannot reach. The Potters do not depart for their Mississippi plantation before they have thoroughly confused and disrupted the community, leaving in their wake injured prides, wounded hearts, and generally troubled minds, the memory of which only time will darken and soften.

Mr. Maxwell's novel will at least put an end to the impression that most American towns in the early part of the century were potential torture chambers, an impression which "King's Row" and novels of its sadistic genre left with us. William Maxwell is an entertaining and sympathetic chronicler who seeks to record the accurate, if not always the happiest, side of family history in his novels. Once again he reveals a strong flair for poetic imagery, for a well-turned, thoughtful phrase, which raises his writing from the pedestrian level of many of our novelists today.

The next time we open the family album, those old snapshots are going to appear less comic, they are going to take on a life and glow which we were not able to perceive so clearly before reading this book.



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## *Ouija Saves the Day*

*NO HIGHWAY. By Nevil Shute. New York: William Morrow & Co.* 1948. 346 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

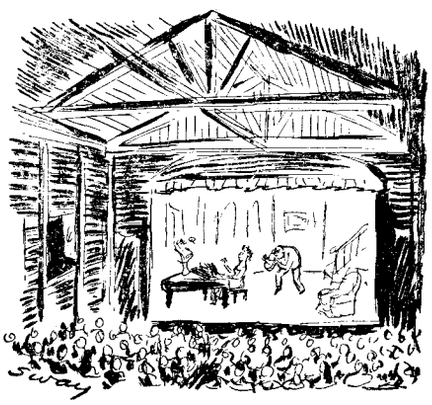
THE author of "No Highway" has, I am told, published ten other novels in America, none of which I find I have read. The jacket copy also informs me that, of these ten novels, four were major book-club selections. This is not, of course, quite like being elected Miss Rheingold four times, but it nevertheless affects me quite as profoundly. Multiply a book club by four and you get a lot of books; enough apparently, if laid front to verso, to reach from Fourth Avenue all the way to the American heart, a remunerative organ which, as all authors know, is located not on the left side of the chest, but at the foot of the rainbow.

Having an old-fashioned interest in the qualitative as well as the quantitative analysis, I approached "No Highway" with my mind like a mirror and my fingers crossed. Even with these precautions, I had a feeling that Mr. Shute was at some disadvantage where I was concerned, inasmuch as I had learned from the jacket that, beside being a successful author, he was also an aeronautical engineer, a subject of which I am deeply ignorant and hence, perhaps, defensively critical. I quickly discovered that Nevil Shute can write lucidly and dramatically about the study of aeronautics. Indeed, for me this material turned out to be the most pleasurable part of the book.

"No Highway" has as its part-time narrator a likable young Englishman named Scott, who is in charge of the Structural Department of the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, where highly-trained, assorted physicists, some of them nuclear, are engaged in subjecting aircraft to all imaginable stresses and strains. Among his staff was Theodore Honey, a shabby, unworldly, absent-minded, meek, stubborn prototype of all the bemused professors of page, stage, or silver screen. Mr. Honey had set up the tailplane of a B.O.A.C. Reindeer and was simulating difficult flying stresses to see how much it would take. His calculations led him to believe that 1,440 hours of such flying conditions would cause that and similar Reindeer tailplanes to disintegrate.

Most of his colleagues had respect for Mr. Honey, but his side interests in pyramidology, automatic writing, and ouija boards made them uneasy and embarrassed. When a Reindeer crashed inexplicably in Canada with a total mortality of personnel, including a Russian diplomat, Scott decided to send Mr. Honey to inspect the wreckage. Enroute to the landing field at Gander Mr. Honey made the disquieting discovery that the Reindeer in which he was flying would pass the danger point of 1,440 hours before they got to Gander. He did his best to warn the pilot to turn back, but nobody believed him except the pretty stewardess and a beautiful, aging American movie actress, a fellow-passenger on her way, along with "No Highway," to Hollywood. They made Gander all right, but when Mr. Honey found they were going to continue on to Ottawa, he quietly grounded the plane by wrecking the landing-gear. About all you need to know of the story from now on is that everything came out all right, that Mr. Honey was proved right against all the frustrations and objections of the Aeronautical Authority and the B.O.A.C., that Mr. Honey's ouija board saved the day, and that both the beautiful movie star and the pretty stewardess fell in love with him. I'll even tell you which one got him: the stewardess, although I knew all along she would. It would have been a different, and more interesting, novel if he had married the movie star from Terre Haute, but I guess Mr. Shute wasn't taking any chances.

This book has a kind of suave tailoring which I suppose accounts for the popularity of his other novels, and which inevitably extends to the characters. They seemed to me to have their faces cut out, to leave spaces for Hollywood to fill in, and when Mr. Honey is put entirely into celluloid, as he surely will be, he's going to be as sweet as his name. As entertainment goes, and it certainly does, "No Highway" is a well-cooked, deftly-served blue-plate special, and a lot of people are going to be faithful to it, after their fashion, while I cry for madder music and stronger wine.



## *Shock Treatment*

*THE SECRET THREAD. By Ethel Vance. New York: Harper & Bros.* 1948. 261 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

DURING a long and highly successful career as a writer, Grace Zaring Stone has used two names: her own, for several excellent and remembered novels, including "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" and "The Cold Journey"; Ethel Vance, for the prodigiously successful "Escape" and three successors. Her latest, "The Secret Thread," does not seem to fit in with the charming nuances of General Yen nor the narratives of breathless adventure represented by "Escape." It is both a novel of a man's life, portraying his struggle for sanity and wholeness, and a melodrama, embroidered with conventional trappings of thieves, abandoned houses, and physical danger. It is as if a psychiatrist had chosen to study his patient in a gangster's hangout.

Cassius Terhune, president of a small college, and once Assistant Secretary of State, is returning from a journey to Germany for the Government, after a mental breakdown, or perhaps only a nervous collapse. He is haunted in his dreams by the old house in which he had lived in New York. He finds it empty, neglected, and waiting for the house-wrecker's hammers. He manages to enter and make his way through a trapdoor to the attic to which he used to escape as a child, now used to store cases of whiskey stolen from the wharves. He breaks his ankle, and he lies there incapacitated, while his adventures begin. He is discovered by a girl who in the tabloids might be called a gangster's moll. But she is far more than that, for in the end she saves his life and his reason. For a day and a half he lies helpless, at the mercy of as ruthless a product of city slums as the reader will be apt to encounter for a long time. He has two other nightmare companions, an old and philosophic scavenger of abandoned refuse, and his angel of mercy's brother, a shambling, moronic youth who will murder at his master's nod.

As the reader continues in some excitement to follow a drama that might at this point suit a radio-serial mystery, he begins to wonder what Ethel Vance is driving at. There is no doubt that the college president will escape, for otherwise there would be no point to the novel at all. But just how is his mental trouble, which remains somehow mysterious, to be relieved by the alarming situation in



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which he has placed himself? If he is not murdered, which in life would seem to be unreasonable enough, it might appear that being scared to death for thirty-six hours would be a strange prelude for a return to sanity. The reader may venture a guess before the end. Cassius falls in love with the girl. He discovers in this fragile, rouged, and uneducated child a lack of fear and clean honesty of purpose that he himself has lacked. Even the street bum and the murderer contribute to his cure. When finally he wakes up in the clean sanity of a hospital bed, he knows, to quote the author, that "she would live her life somewhere unknown to him. Like the rest, she might never have been. But like them she was in himself, where all things have their reality in the sight of the sun, the long search, the experience and memory of love."

—*Erich Hartmann.*

**Nevil Shute's "book has a kind of suave tailoring which [may account] for the popularity of his other novels. . . ."**

# *Life In a Police State*

*MAN IS STRONG. By Corrado Alvaro. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. 264 pp. $3.*

Reviewed by HARRY BULL

WRITTEN under the Fascist regime by a cosmopolitan journalist from southern Italy, this study of life in a police state originally carried the more appropriate title "Fear Over the World." Although the main setting clearly suggested Moscow, the Fascist censors evidently realized the similarity of its oppressive atmosphere to what prevailed under the Axis governments and, besides opposing the title, required Signor Alvaro to add a preface definitely locating it in the Soviet Union. Even they were affected by the pall of fear which he builds up into a mood of positively, or one might better say, negatively, Kafkan effect. For the result of living under totalitarian supervision is shown in the disintegration of all of Alvaro's characters with the exception of the investigator, symbol of all secret police, and to me, I am sorry to admit, the only person in the book who manages to justify the title "Man Is Strong."

Alvaro went to Russia in the early Thirties, and because, in spite of its sparsity of detail, his work bears the stamp of what a highly sensitive personality must have absorbed from experience in his immediate circle, he therefore chooses for his chief characters people who still preserve a trace of influence of the old regime. Dirck, the hero, disgusted with the decadent capitalism of Western Europe, comes back as an engineer to the land of promise where years of revolution have left their mark since he went away as a boy. In the whole country he knows only Barbara, with whom he has corresponded since their meeting abroad. The daughter of liquidated aristocrats, Barbara is at once attracted to his free, foreign ways and frightened by the risk of associating with someone from outside. Terrified by observation, and shattered by alternating surges of guilt, suspicion, passion, and indifference, Dirck and Barbara carry on one of the most infantile and tortured affairs in an era of novels fairly bursting with infantile and tortured lovers.

While their compulsive behavior is convincingly and often movingly described—and one feels that the author is indeed a Latin who understands the emotional needs of women—Dirck is so immature that their debacle might well have been realized in almost any other society. Barbara's unfulfilled character is clearly the result of her hard and violent surroundings, but the presumed point of the novel, as a comment on the police state's withering influence on what we regard as the social and creative flowering of individuals, is weakened by the lack of evidence that Dirck would ever have amounted to anything anywhere. It is true that one of the few real insights we are given into Dirck's background discloses the early sense of guilt imposed by his Catholic upbringing, and perhaps the author wishes us to draw the conclusion that the laying on of guilt will pave the way for anxiety neuroses under almost any later stress. Nevertheless, the general play of ideas in the stimulating dialogue of "Man Is Strong" offers better evidence for the acceptance of the author's thesis as an attack on totalitarianisms.

Considered in this realm, his book is not likely to carry in English the weight of Koestler's more intense "Darkness at Noon," or even that of Evelyn Waugh's postwar satire on the one-party state, "Scott-King's Modern Europe" (scheduled for publication in this country). Like both Waugh and Koestler, Alvaro is, however, a man of much greater intellectual force than we are accustomed to find among our native novelists. If he lacks the compassion which, without losing his artistic integrity, Koestler achieved only in "Darkness at Noon"; if he fails to show the clear purpose of

—*Blackstone Studios.*

**Ethel Vance's new novel "does not seem to fit in with the nuances of 'General Yen' nor the adventure [of] 'Escape'."**

—*Vasari.*

**"Corrado Alvaro is a man of much greater intellectual force than we are accustomed to find among our native novelists."**



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Waugh's mature irony, it may be that as a realistic Latin he discerns more grays than blacks or whites in the complex relation of modern man to society. On the other hand, judging from the unexpected twist which breaks the suspense at the end of his novel, it may be that he was fatalistic at the time of writing. Lacking such a faith, such zeal to expose in order to reform as activates Waugh and Koestler, he may well have finished his story with a question mark, unwilling to force on the reader any conclusion which his own integrity still queried. Or again, working in the shadow of Mussolini, he may have felt obliged to underwrite, confident that an audience oversensitized to see through censorship would read into it meanings like those we are told the occupied Parisians discovered between the lines of Anouilh's "Antigone."

In any case, if this book does not quite achieve the promise implicit in much of its writing, it still does no small service in introducing to America another serious creative artist, whose work in a free Italy may be expected to clarify his philosophy.

## *Far East Intrigue*

*FAIR WIND TO JAVA. By Garland Roark. New York: Doubleday & Co.* 1948. 370 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

IN this new volume Mr. Roark again reveals a talent for burlesque adventure unequaled since the days of the late Walter Traprock. This time the framework is concerned with a clipper ship voyage to Java and a series of intrigues so complex that it is doubtful whether Mr. Roark himself understands them or meant anyone else to. He has put everything into the book—a storm at sea, a mutiny, a battle with pirates, a black-hearted villain, a noble young hero and a rich and beautiful heiress with whose picture he falls in love, Oriental potentates, dancing girls, Dutch residents, and ship owners, who parade through a series of actions of a hilarious absurdity seldom equaled in fiction. A sample:

Things have come to a pretty pass at the court of a Javanese Radja where much of the action takes place. The Radja has made a prime minister of Captain Boll, the above mentioned villain, but the ship owner to whom Boll has played false is on hand to bring the scoundrel to justice. Shall he be given up? They settle the point by, of all things, a game of checkers,

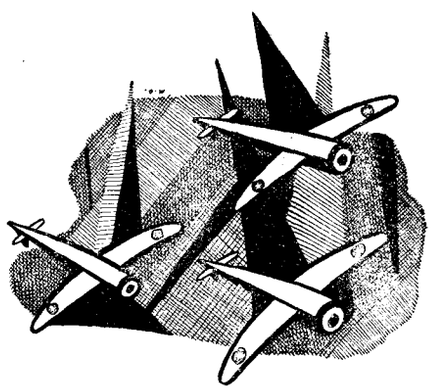
(*Continued on page* 23)

**Americana.** *Bradford Smith's "Americans from Japan," reviewed below, (third in Lippincott's The People of America Series), is indebted to a number of recent studies of our Japanese-Americans in the war. In California, far from the centers of combat, pressure groups and racial fears spelled unjust treatment for the Japanese-Americans. The unhappy story of California's Tule Lake concentration camp was told in "The Spoilage," by Dorothy S. Thomas and Richard Nishimoto, while the War Relocation Authority's efforts to redress these injustices was summarized in a Government pamphlet, "WRA—A Story of Human Conservation." Also, Andrew Lind's "Hawaii's Japanese: An Experiment in Democracy" described the fine record of the Japanese-Americans in the islands during the war, and Orville Shirey's "Americans: The Story of the 442d Combat Team" documented the glowing war record of some of the Nisei troops.*

# *2d-Class Citizens, A-1 Loyalty*

*AMERICANS FROM JAPAN. By Bradford Smith. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.* 1948. 409 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON



ONE of the most searching lessons of World War II comes out of the experience and record of our Americans from Japan. In December 1941 there were 126,000 Japanese-Americans in the continental United States, or one-tenth of one per cent of the population. More than two-thirds were American citizens, chiefly young people who had never seen Japan. The others were their alien parents. Of this group 110,000, largely from the West Coast states, were evacuated from their homes and placed behind barbed wire in desert camps. In Hawaii, where another 150,000 Japanese-Americans were living, no such measures proved necessary or were taken.

But this is only half the story. Some 26,000 Japanese-Americans, or nearly ten per cent of their number, enlisted in the armed forces of the United States. The great majority were volunteers, many of whom left for induction from the concentration camps. These servicemen, and particularly those who knew the Japanese language, were an invaluable asset on the Far Eastern battlefronts. Some of them, like Sergeant Ben Kuroki, with thirty bombing missions in Europe and twenty-eight more over Japan, became national heroes. The 100th Infantry Battalion, operating in Italy, was made up entirely of volunteers from the Japanese-Americans in Hawaii. Its 1,300 members "received more than 1,000 Purple Hearts, seventy-three Silver Stars, ninety-six Bronze Stars, twenty-one Distinguished Service Crosses, six Legion of Merit Medals, and sixteen Division Citations."

Nearly a century of large-scale contacts between Japanese and Americans, beginning in Hawaii during the late 1860's, lay back of the events of World War II. For the first time, Bradford Smith sets the whole of the story in its broad perspective and gives proper emphasis to its various parts. Heretofore much less attention has been paid to the Japanese in Hawaii than to those on the West Coast. Half of "Americans from Japan" is devoted to the Japanese community in Hawaii. Too often, moreover, the human side of the story has been lost sight of, and diplomatic negotiations or Congressional attitudes on immigration issues pushed to the fore. It was more important perhaps to know how the Japanese were faring, what evidences of good citizenship they were showing, and the kind of welcome they were being offered. The oversight is abundantly made good in this book. Well over half its pages are stirring human documents, alive with the everyday struggles, victories, and heartbreaks of the Japanese who came to live among us. One can only guess



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at the long background of patient research on the author's part, and the degree of sympathy and tact in his approach, that led to so much detailed and intimate disburdening to him by so many Japanese-American individuals and families. The reader is indebted both to his careful work and to the frank responses of his Japanese-American friends for the completeness of this remarkable clinical survey of one of America's racial minorities.

Those Americans who have known the Japanese at first hand will not be surprised at the conclusions reached by this survey. More clearly set apart than most similar groups, the Japanese-Americans naturally reacted to an ostracism they keenly felt by withdrawing at times into clannish communities. But the reception accorded them was not universally negative, and they responded eagerly to generous overtures that drew them into the fuller life of the community. Economically, they had to start at the bottom, both in Hawaii and on the West Coast. By their hard work and intelligence they forged ahead, becoming too often an object of envy to many of their competitors. They were a law-abiding group, with a record far above the average. In the schools, the children established a monotonously repetitive record of superior achievement. The Japanese parents made great sacrifices to have their children get a higher education. Not seldom the outcome was a family tragedy, as the children moved into the larger reaches of American life and left the parents behind in their narrower backwater. Finally the children passed into business and professional life, and here too they were proving once again the worth of this new group of American citizens.

Today the wounds inflicted by the evacuation policy of World War II are slowly healing. A courageously liberal administration of the evacuee camps helped. About 57,000 of the evacuated Japanese went back to their West Coast communities, but little assistance was supplied to make good their economic losses. They still faced the discriminatory California land laws, applied even to returned Japanese veterans. The other 53,000 evacuees found a better atmosphere in Chicago and various Midwestern cities, though forced to start over again economically.

Bradford Smith's sympathetic, accurate, and, above all, human story of the Japanese-Americans throws light on all current minority and racial issues in the United States, and thus on one of the central problems aggravating contemporary American life.

# *Hymn of Hate*

*THE ROOSEVELT MYTH. By John T. Flynn. New York: Devin-Adair Co. 1948. 438 pp. $3.50.*

Reviewed by ROBERT S. ALLEN

THIS is another "hate Roosevelt" book—the most hating of all. If a future volume should exceed it in venom, it would be pure mania.

Actually, this is not a book on the late President. It is a case study of a writer's pathological hatred. The book is a complete waste of time for anyone seeking information about Roosevelt. It's possible the volume might be of some interest to a psychiatrist studying literary phobias.

Illustrative of the weird gyrations of the author's malice is the astounding list of sources he solemnly enumerates as reliable authorities for his berserk incantations. High on the list is himself.

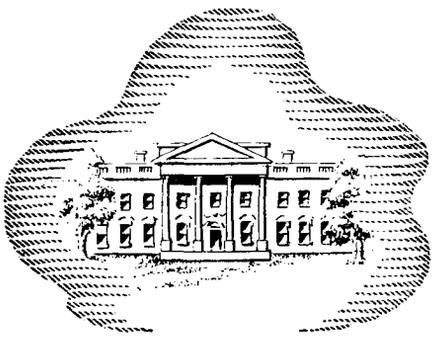
Frequent footnote references to back-of-the-book documentation produce the startling information that the author is citing himself.

Other notable and impeccable authorities listed are Westbrook Pegler and John O'Donnell.

Still others are an unnamed "high-ranking officer" who, the author relates, told him of sitting close to Roosevelt when he had a glassy-eyed fainting fit, and unlisted newspaper articles. Here is an example of that sort of thing: "Mrs. Roosevelt's acceptance of gifts, her flouting of rationing regulations during the war, etc., are matters of public record in the newspapers of the time."

There are few, if any, hates, accusations, innuendoes, rumors, and charges that were hurled at Roosevelt that the author does not ferociously rehash and embellish. His frothing fury is exemplified by the fact that he thinks Jim Farley was too friendly to Roosevelt in his malice-ridden book.

And lest a reader still should feel dissatisfied, the author earnestly assures us that he knows a great deal more than he unfolds, but which, somehow, he feels he can't reveal at this time. This unique reticence is one of the especially choice bits in the book.



Another is the flat accusation that current high prices are due to the "Roosevelt inflation." That's one for the GOP. Even the Republican National Committee has not yet thought of blaming on Roosevelt the stratospheric cost of living—which started a year after his death.

Climax of the book is a novel publisher's item. It consists of a card asking the reader to advise why the book was bought. A tabulation of the returns—if any—might be very interesting.

# *Americana Notes*

THE Revolutionary campaign of John Allan, watchdog of the Maine border, did much to ensure that the St. Croix and not the Kennebec should be one boundary river with Canada. This whole area about Passamaquoddy, Machias, and Calais has had an eventful history about which Americans know little. Guy Murchie covers it with careful research and interesting anecdotal lore in **"Saint Croix, The Sentinel River"** (Duell, Sloan, & Pearce; $3.50). His chapters on the Abenaki Indians and their legends, and on the skirmishing in the Revolution and War of 1812, are full of valuable new material. His treatment of the period since 1815, however, is disappointingly sketchy.

* * *

So much American history has been made since 1900 that no excuse is now needed for half-year university courses in the subject, or for thick textbooks devoted to it. The latest of these texts runs beyond 850 pages. This is **"Since 1900: A History of the United States in Our Times,"** by Oscar T. Barck, Jr., and Nelson M. Blake of Syracuse University (Macmillan; $6.50). The authors aim at comprehensiveness, not selectivity or interpretation. Though their heavy book is written with clarity, it is rather overladen with facts, and is for the student and not the general reader. Economic, political, and diplomatic history are covered with accuracy and with a most commendable objectivity. The authors do justice to T. R., Wilson, and F. D. R., without yielding to the too common tendency to do injustice to Coolidge and Hoover. They do land on the isolationists, however, with refreshing vigor. The one marked gap in this full treatise is in the difficult field of cultural and intellectual history.

ALLAN NEVINS.



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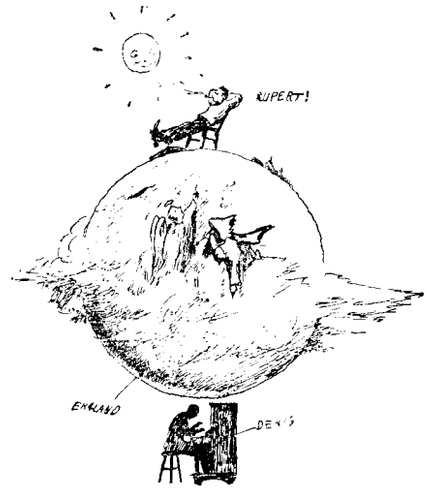
**Personal History.** *Rupert Brooke "flung himself into the world," wrote Walter de la Mare, "as a wasp pounces into a cake shop, Hotspur into the fighting." And this "great lover" had the grace to die young, at war in foreign fields, so that no one will ever know whether the legend of Rupert Brooke lives more because of the man or because of his poetry. "I want to walk a thousand miles, and write one thousand plays, and sing one thousand poems, and drink one thousand pots of beer, and kiss one thousand girls," he wrote. Brooke had an exuberance which contrasts sharply with the nostalgic pessimism of Max Miller, whose latest book is reviewed below. Could one say that the contrast lies between two generations, two wars?*




—*Rupert Brooke sketch from the book.*

**R. B. sits on top of the world (in the South Seas) while friend Denis Browne toils in England's underworld.**

# *England's Own*

*RED WINE OF YOUTH: A Life of Rupert Brooke. By Arthur Stringer. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1948. 287 pp. $4.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

"WHAT he accomplished in his short life must be accepted as more a generous promise than an attained perfection." In those words, on page 231 of this equable and admirable short life of Rupert Brooke, Mr. Stringer, a Canadian poet as well as prose writer, delivers a verdict with which we all must agree. It avoids the lavish praise which the poet enjoyed in his lifetime, and also, on the other hand, the absurd dispraise of a recent newspaper critic, who averred that the slightest breath of true criticism could not blow aside the frailty of the poet's verse. But his best verse was not fragile. It had sinew. It had character. It can still be enjoyed, both in its youthful enthusiasms and its equally youthful cynicisms. The more objective poems, as Sir Edward Marsh thought, are probably the best. When the challenge came, the poet responded superbly, and his five sonnets of England's crisis will still be remembered long.

To be endowed by nature with the looks of a young Greek god can be a curse as well as a blessing. Fortunately, Rupert Brooke had a buoyancy of temperament, a humor, and intelligence that brought him through the green sickness made famous by the words of Keats into strong manhood. He was a natural romantic, and enjoyed life with great gusto. But he wished neither to live nor to write "softly." He journeyed far, for a young man, and in the South Seas indulged an innocent—or comparatively innocent—paganism to the full. Before he died he found in an unusually talented Irish actress one whom he loved with his steadiest devotion. He was equally fortunate in the unremittingly encouraging friendship of the famous "Eddie" Marsh in England, to whom so many of the Georgian poets owed a large debt. Brooke had great other friends, gifted, valiant young men, unusual and understanding women. In this country and in Canada he instantly made friends, who never forgot his radiant and entertaining passage across their lives. His wit and gaiety went along with his genuine poetic gift. He was, however, rather insular in his deepest feelings, something that time and growth would have remedied. Only at the end had he quite shaken off the "clever young man"—such an enduring temptation to talented, youthful Englishmen. The termination of his gallant life was, by his friends, assured of perfect circumstance, and on Skyros the Pentelic marble marks the spot where he would have liked to lie.

This vivid book is in no sense an appraisal of his work as an artist; it is the rapid record of a life lived rapidly and for the most part joyously. My only stricture concerning Mr. Stringer's work would be in regard to the chapter heads, which are not inspired and might have been omitted. The book is prefaced by a poem written on Brooke by Christopher Morley, which first appeared in the latter's volume "Chimney-smoke." The volume is illustrated, principally with photographs, which are well chosen.

"His very insularity," says Mr. Stringer, "was a sort of burning glass that focused attention into flame," and that is well said. Brooke hated

# *Your Literary I.Q.*

**By Howard Collins**

Ann Gossman, of Houston, Tex., who began reading this department at the age of eight, contributes a short canto. Can you identify the lines that make it up? Allowing four points for the author and four points for the poem from which each line was taken, a score of sixty is par, sixty-eight is very good, and seventy-six or better is excellent. Answers are on page 16.

FAIR CREATURE OF AN HOUR

She was a phantom of delight
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Robed in flames and amber light
And all that's best of dark and bright.
Her hair was long, her foot was light
When first she gleamed upon my sight.

What care I how fair she be!
Soon after, she was gone from me.
They cried, "La Belle Dame sans Merci!"
Had it any been but she . . . . .
But things like that, you know, must be.
What shall, alas, become of me?



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smugness and conventionality, yet, when he was far away from her, the stately lawns and ancient ivy of England called him home. "He missed," says Mr. Stringer, speaking of Canada, "the joy of seeing a million acres of prairie wheatland turning gold in the sun," though he loved Lake Louise—and the Lady of the Chateau—for their perfection. He had the "tendency to theatricalize experience," being a golden youth. But he was a Fabian, long before England turned Socialist, and he felt that Gauguin had not at all done justice to the physical beauty of the women of the South Seas. I challenge anybody to finish this book without a feeling of nostalgia for the summer of youth. Yet this was no butterfly life, after all. This was the making of a man, and of a poet who might, with the luck of the wheel, have stood today among our greatest. As it is, there is still an unfading glow about his memory.

## *La Jolla, Calif.*

*THE TOWN WITH THE FUNNY NAME. By Max Miller. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.* 1948. 224 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by COURTLANDT CANBY

THERE are a number of things to say about this small book. In the first place, it is an unusual book, and, whatever its faults may be, that is a blessing in these times of stereotyped, mass-produced literature. Miller made his reputation in 1932 with "I Cover the Waterfront," a book rather similar in technique to the present one, which is a series of deliberately informal essays about La Jolla, Calif.—the "town with the funny name." And that brings me to another point: the essay is almost a lost art today; it is refreshing, therefore, to run across a book like this, which is readable, whimsically humorous, unpretentious, and pleasantly reflective. These are the qualities one expects to find in first-class essays.

Miller's La Jolla is a pleasant little seaside town not far from San Diego, inhabited by lobstermen, old people playing shuffleboard and waiting to die, scientists from the Institute of Oceanography, surf fishers, the divers after abalone, and, of course, old man Perky and Mrs. Billings (the only two "characters," except for Max Miller himself, who take on flesh and spirit in these rambling sketches). "Most of us are just a bunch of people collected here on The Edge from everywhere—waiting." Miller writes. There are no Important People in the town—Miller

(*Continued on page* 30)

**Poetry.** *The weaknesses and the bad judgment that led Ezra Pound into the camp of the enemy have naturally obscured our memory of his earlier contribution to poetry. His apostasy led him so perilously close to the final judgment of the scaffold that the critic who surveys "The Pisan Cantos," his latest published work, must treat him as a fanatic, perhaps mad at times, and also as an inspired creator of whom it must be remembered that "he has been among the best of our time." Robinson Jeffers, another American who is a great poet, has recently been criticized for the violence of his heretical political opinions, expressed in "The Double Axe and Other Poems," and a consequently lively controversy rages about this book. It is safe to say that poets may have philosophical and political ideas if they are not out of tune with popular currents of thought of their day; but that when they disagree in matters of vital importance they are called to task more sharply than the writer of prose.*

# *"What Does Mr. Pound Believe?"*

*THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND. New York: New Directions.* 1948. 536 *pp.* $5.

*THE PISAN CANTOS. By Ezra Pound. The same.* 118 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

EZRA POUND has written eighty-four of the 100 cantos which will compose his magnum opus. The entire eight-four are collected in "The Cantos of Ezra Pound." The last ten of these, written when Pound was imprisoned near Pisa, are also published separately as "The Pisan Cantos."

Items and bits of information that to the normal mind seem merely indicative of a general problem, which of course may be important, seem to the fanatic to be pieces of incontrovertible evidence in an iron-bound and rigorous pattern. Most fanatics, as witness certain semanticists who see their obsession as the cure for cancer, toothache, and original sin, strike us as amusing crackpots. Not all of them upset the tenor of society. Ezra Pound's latter-day obsession with the evil of usuary led him to treason, and had he not been judged insane it might have cost him his life.

**"That which is grotesque in Ezra Pound's career and poetry can hardly do permanent injury to that which is great."**

It is easy enough to condemn exaggerated forms of usury and finance capital that allow some people to live luxuriously by clipping coupons that are made valuable by the sweat of many brows. The Middle Ages agreed with Pound in the matter. So did John Ruskin. Usury, as Pound saw it, led to war and the vulgarization of society through mass-culture. His symbolic capitalists are frequently munitions makers and tourists. Only a fanatic like Pound, however, would be unable to see that the Fascism he espoused as cure-all had a much greater need to make war and suppress the flowerings of the human spirit.

One may suspect that his obsession with usury has served Pound no better as an organizing principle than some other obsession might have. If he had lived in the Middle Ages he would possibly have found the doctrine of Christian charity to be the cause of society's evils. Whatever he has broken with is gross idiocy and whomever he has broken with are gross idiots. Apparently he has always had grit in his soul. And he has owned an ego that might more equitably have been distributed among three or four of his contemporaries. (The same fanatical spirit undoubtedly aided him thirty years ago in establishing certain tenets worthy of careful attention: rhythm in poetry should follow musical cadence, not the metronome; the prose tradition should be read-



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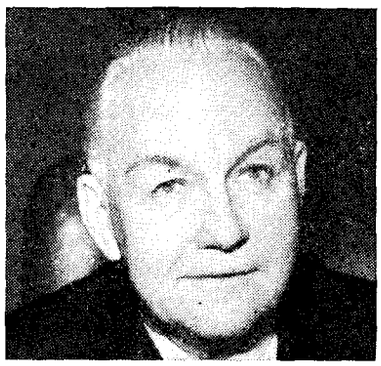

## *My Current Reading*

**Byron Price,** newspaperman and United States Director of Censorship from 1941 to 1945, is now assistant secretary general to the United Nations for administrative and financial services.

THE UGLY DACHSHUND, *by G. B. Stern (Macmillan)*
DAVID HARUM: *A Story of American Life (1898), by Edward Noyes Westcott*
THE EVERGLADES, *by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas (Rinehart)*
THE GREAT REHEARSAL, *by Carl Van Doren (Viking)*
THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND FATHER SMITH, *by Bruce Marshall (Houghton Mifflin)*
GOVERNMENT AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS, *by Zechariah Chafee, Jr. (University of Chicago)*
THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE, *by Robert Louis Stevenson*
POSTSCRIPT TO YESTERDAY, *by Lloyd Morris (Random House)*
THE NINE TAILORS, *by Dorothy L. Sayers (Harcourt, Brace)*
"BEN HUR" WALLACE, *by Irving McKee (University of California)*

mitted to poetry; and concreteness should be sought in poetic expression.)

The preoccupation with usury seems to have come rather late. T. S. Eliot once asked: "What does Mr. Pound believe?" And Yeats thought the Cantos would be formless because they had no controlling idea at their center. It is quite possible that for many years Pound did not think of usury as his controlling idea. It may also be, however, that in his early hatred for a money-minded and materialistic society (see, for instance, Cantas XIV, XV, and XVI) Pound had his theme, usury, in more than an incipient form; and even though the explicit statement of it appears most frequently in "The Pisan Cantos," the theme is treated most extensively and intelligently in Cantos XLV:

With *Usura* . . .
no picture is made to endure nor to live with
but it is made to sell and sell quickly
with usura, sin against nature,
is thy bread ever more of stale rags
is thy bread dry as paper . . .

The strong emphasis on usury in these most recent Cantos may function reflexively, to some extent, to quicken those he wrote years ago. But much will remain fragmentary.

Despite the frequent references to his avowed theme in "The Pisan Cantos," the organization in them is much more chaotic. The directions suggested by his statements and asides seem both multiple and muddled. The controlled pitch that was once virile and strong is now flaccid and hysterical. His once viciously satirical eye and his once wonderfully rich sensibility have somehow degenerated. None of the portraits of, or the backward glances at, the men he has known are so good as that of Henry James in Canto VII:

And the great domed head, *con gli occhi onesti e tardi*
Moves before me, phantom with weighted motion,
*Grave incessu,* drinking the tone of things,
And the old voice lifts itself weaving an endless sentence.

Nor are there any lines comparable to the simple dignity of those which open Canto XVII:

So that the vines burst from my fingers
And the bees weighted with pollen
Move heavily in the vine shoots

It is a great irony that Pound, who could, with Hulme and Eliot, convince a generation of the need, in writing poetry, for being precise and for having a sense of the real world, could himself become both garrulous and the victim of delusions.

Perhaps those who wrote pieces on Pound for an issue of *Poetry* a year or so ago set the right example in treating the Pound question. The man is, intermittently at least, mad; as a political opponent he was ineffectual and pathetic; as a literary influence and as a poet he has been among the best of our time. That which is grotesque in his career and in his poetry can hardly do permanent injury to that which is great.

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### LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Title: Keats: "La Belle Dame sans Merci." 1. Wordsworth: "She Was a Phantom of Delight." 2. Milton: "Il Penseroso." 3. Milton: "L'Allegro." 4. Byron: "She Walks in Beauty." 5. Keats: "La Belle Dame sans Merci." 6. Wordsworth: "She Was a Phantom of Delight." 7: Wither: "The Author's Resolution." 8. Blake: "The Traveler." 9. Keats: "La Belle Dame sans Merci." 10. Suckling: "The Constant Lover." 11. Southey: "The Battle of Blenheim." 12. Lyly: "Cupid and Campaspe."

## *Hellenic Verse*

*THE KING ASINE AND OTHER POEMS. By George Seferis. London: John Lehmann, Ltd.* 1948. 82 *pp.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Reviewed by RAE DALVEN

GEORGE SEFERIS, the eminent Greek poet and critic, intensely conscious of modern events, but best identified with the symbolist movement and the "mysticism of Greek history and tradition," is adequately represented for English readers in this book of translations. Prefaced with a penetrating analysis of the poet's life and work, by the British poet and novelist Rex Warner, selections of Seferis's verse are translated by the poets Bernard Spencer, Nanos Valaoritis, and Laurence Durrell. Nanos Valaoritis and Bernard Spencer are known to English readers for other fine translations from the Greek which have appeared from time to time in *New Daylight and Writing,* the annual literary publication which has devoted an unusual amount of attention to modern Greek poetry. In "The King Asine and Other Poems" the translators have captured the spirit of Seferis's verse and recreated some of his best-known poems with admiration and love and a fine sense of poetry.

And this is as it should be, for George Seferis, winner of the coveted Palamas poetry prize (1947), is not only a poet. He has rediscovered for Greece the demotic tradition of the seventeenth-century Cretan classic "Erotokritos!" A translator himself, with a fine knowledge of the English language, Seferis translated into Greek the "Waste Land" and other poems by T. S. Eliot.

In spite of the general excellence of the translations, I found inaccuracies in a number of poems which I feel blur the vivid imagery of the original. In "The Old Man on the River Bank" the Greek original reads "makeshift hospital," which the translators have interpreted as "little hospital." In the same poem, they translate "long river" as "wide river" and again in the same poem, where the original reads, "Because we have loaded the song," they have translated in "King Asine" as "Because the song has been loaded." Occasionally, too, the translators have retained the Greek sentence structure and, by so doing, they have retained the foreignism. In "The Myth of Our History" the English reads: "What do they seek our souls as they travel?" These are only details but they alter the meaning of the poet and mar an otherwise fine book of translations.



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# *Gleanings from the Antipodes*

*MODERN AUSTRALIAN POETRY. Selected by H. M. Green.* 1946. *Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press.* 8s. 6d.

*AUSTRALIAN POETRY: 1943. Selected by H. M. Green.* 1944. *Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson, Ltd.*

*COMING AFTER: An Anthology of Poetry from the Low Countries. Selected and translated by Adrian J. Barnouw.* 1948. *New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press.* $5.

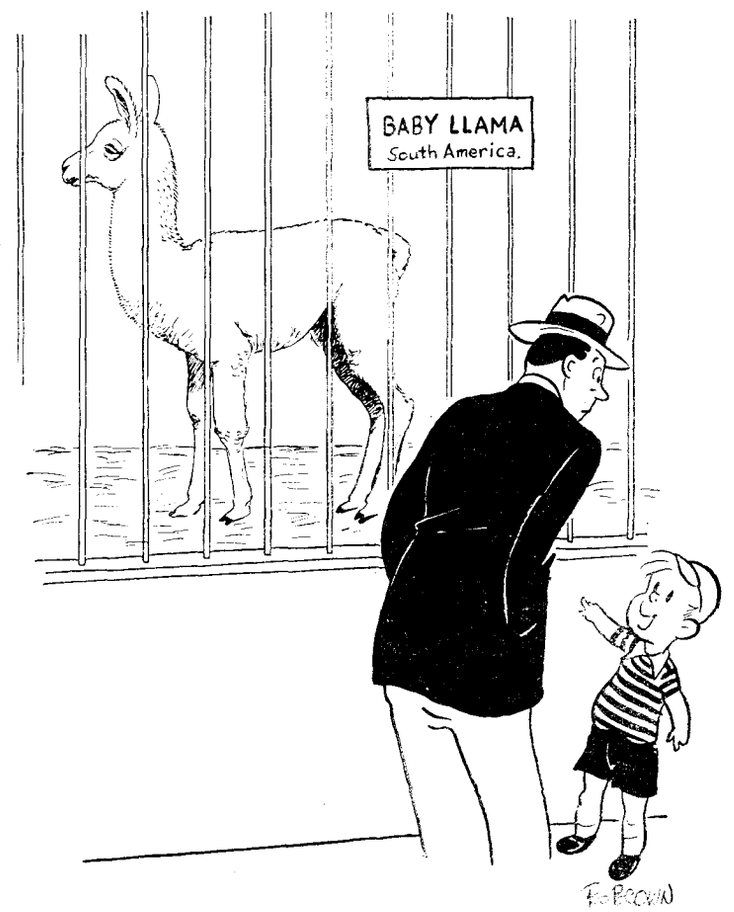
Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

RUMORS of a renaissance in Australian poetry have made their way across the Pacific; even before the war readers up here as well as down under heard occasional notes from such poets as Will Dyson, R. D. Fitzgerald, and T. I. Moore. Some seven or eight years ago our own David McCord wrote me enthusiastically about Ernest Moll, born in Murtoa, Victoria, educated at Harvard, and author of the distinctly Australian collection "Cut from Mulga," published by the Melbourne University Press. A tentative collection of antipodean verse was put together by H. M. Green in 1943; three years later the editor prepared a greatly enlarged and much more representative compilation.

On the debit side, it must be said that the editor and some of the contributors place too great an emphasis on nativity; there is an almost grim insistence on the Australian consciousness, an asserveration which limits the implications to a locale. The look of the landscape is stressed at the expense of original observation; the recital of native fauna and flora—kookaburras, collibahs, regent-birds, gum-trees—does not establish a native idiom. On the credit side, there is in Mr. Green's collection a genuine vitality as well as a wide variety. Most of the younger poets have taken their cues from the mixed images and muffled violence of their immediate predecessors in England and America, but several of them have achieved their own distinctive accents. A real manner, not a mere mannerism, is apparent in Christopher Brennan (five of whose characteristic pieces are reprinted from "Poems" published more than thirty years ago) and R. D. Fitzgerald, whose excerpts from "Moonlight Acre" and the long "Essay on Memory" are full-throated without being strident. Other poets who have a way of making a point with a neatly twisted phrase are James McAuley, who puts Marc's "Blue Horses" into five-gaited rhyme; Kenneth Slessor, who combines whimsicality with gravity; A. D. Hope, whose "The Return from the Freudian Islands" is a nimble exercise in ironic wit; Ronald McCuaig, whose light verse has a touch of not-too-savage satire; William Hart-Smith, Lesbia Harford, and Leonard Mann. It is easy, and not quite sporting, for one anthologist to complain of another anthologist's omissions, but, although Mr. Green reprints two of Ernest Moll's poems, I miss his "Foxes Among the Lambs," "The Bush Speaks," "Winter Ploughing" (like a transplanted Robert Frost), "The Snake," and "Bottle Swallows." And, now that I am in this querulous mood, why is there no representation, not even a mention, of John Manifold, perhaps the best of the foreign war-poets? Manifold was born in Melbourne in 1915, and was one of the few Australian poets to achieve notice in America; his sharply-edged "Selected Verse" was published about two years ago by the John Day Company.

American readers know little about the poetry of the Dutch people. Dr. Barnouw's collection will give them less excuse than they have had for their ignorance. In a rich gleaning of some seven centuries gathered into some three hundred pages, Dr. Barnouw has chosen selections from fifty-six poets and has enriched his volume with an introduction which furnishes a background of Dutch political history.

The book begins with a group of archaic love songs by the thirteenth-century Hadewijch and John, Duke of Brabant. It runs through a rollicking rhymed version of "Reynard Fox," that ever-popular medieval beast epic; varied sections of ballads and devotional songs; the simple but searching lyrics of Jacobus Revius and Constantin Huygens; a few exhibits of the extraordinarily versatile Joost van den Vondel; and a fair sampling of the moderns. The contemporary poets reveal their indebtedness to their European masters, chiefly to poets like Valery and painters like Utrillo, but they have their own temperaments and technique. Among the more recent, Johan Buning, Theun de Vries, Martinus Nijhoff, Ed Hoornik, and Gerrit Achterberg are the most interesting. Dr. Barnouw's translations are always competent and many of his versions are much more than that. His rhymes are both daring and effective; in most instances, the reader will receive the enjoyment that comes only from an original creation.




"Where's his mmama?"



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# *Innocents Abroad & World Peace*

HENRY C. WOLFE

ON the terrace of Paris's Café de la Paix an American ostentatiously lighted his cigarette with a franc note. His companions laughed. The waiters and the French patrons were not amused. Getting enough francs together to compete with the black market and inflation is no joke to the French. People who have gone through the humiliations of military defeat and the misery of Nazi occupation can hardly be expected to take kindly to ridicule at the hands of visitors whose country was spared those tragedies.

At the Gare de Lyon I saw people stop and look at two men. Their long suit-coats would have identified them as Americans even if their speech had not. They had apparently just come up from Italy; each carried a suitcase plastered over with lira notes. None of the Europeans smiled. They resented both the gesture of wastefulness and the contempt for European poverty implicit in the flippant misuse of the currency.

On London's Strand one afternoon two girls stopped me to ask the way to Westminster Abbey. They wore blue jeans rolled up to and shirt-tails hanging almost down to their knees. Their ship was sailing the next day for New York; they wanted to top off their foreign travel with some last-minute "cultural stuff." I gave them directions, along with a warning that they would outrage British sensibilities if they wore their campus outfits in Westminster. (I had seen similarly attired young women stopped at the door of St. Mark's in Venice.)

I had occasion to advise another *enfante terrible* from west of the Atlantic that she would be doing little to promote the cause of international understanding if she carried out her threat to bash in a bobby's helmet *pour le sport*.

In the Savoy grille one evening a middle-aged American at the next table complained to the waiter about the food. "You forgot to bring the bread!" he said sharply. "But, sir," explained the waiter, "you're having a sweet, and we're not allowed to serve both. Would you prefer the bread to the sweet?" "That's awful," the diner objected. "I've been in London three days and haven't had a full meal yet. Nothing but fish. I'm hungry all the time!" The waiter smiled frostily. "If you'll excuse me, sir, that's the way we've had it over here for years." The American deserved the rebuke. He was making no allowance for Britain's austerity program, enforced by the drastic shortage of food and "hard" currency. He was another of the tourists who lost Uncle Sam good will abroad last year.

This summer several hundred thousand American tourists have been in Europe. The situation fills officials in our embassies and consulates with fear and trembling. The officials of friendly governments, too. For in 1948 the visiting American is on the spot. In the tension that grips Europe today he is more than a dispenser of the "hard" currency essential to European recovery. He is an unofficial ambassador of good or ill will and an actor in the drama of international relations. The collective impression that he makes will probably have more influence on European public opinion than the "Voice of America."

Unfortunately, the American abroad does not always realize his responsibility. If he creates a good impression, he strengthens, be it ever so imperceptibly, the cause of international friendship, and understanding. His misconduct and his mistakes, on the other hand, will be seized upon to build still higher the obstacles of international suspicion and hatred. He can do the cause of peace a lot of harm.

Our foreign service representatives are not especially worried about the compatriot who will go broke or lose his passport or storm the embassy to demand action against the hotel that refuses to extend his stay longer than the time he had agreed on. This good soul is a nuisance, but he is all in the day's work. What causes our foreign service representatives anxiety is the traveler whose conduct stirs up resentment against the United States and can be used as anti-American and anti-ERP propaganda. Officials of the Marshall Plan nations are nervous about this type of visitor too.

"It's the old story," an American embassy officer in Western Europe said to me a few months ago. "Take 100 of our tourists and you have ninety-five well-behaved, friendly people. But it's the other five who make the lasting impression. Europe judges the USA by the ill-mannered, noisy, chauvinistic minority."

That was true, of course, before the war. Then, as now, Europeans remembered longest the loud Americans, the crowd who flaunted their money, the chauvinists who showed their contempt for the peoples, customs, and plumbing of other lands. Today, when the average European has little money to spend and is short of food, clothing, soap, cigarettes, candy, and consumer goods that Americans take for granted, he can hardly help envying the prosperous, well-fed visitor from overseas. He resents the loud Americans, the flaunters and the chauvinists who come from an unbombed and uninvaded country. He is in no mood, especially because he was long underfed and his nerves are on edge, to put up with the prankish ways or the grand airs that bespeak transatlantic excess of well-being.

OFTEN it is less what the visiting American does than the way he does it that works mischief. Last year I saw an American, checking out of an English hotel, contemptuously toss the doorman a bar of candy. The doorman, who wore the campaign ribbon of the 8th Army, glared after the departing pass-thrower. Candy was a luxury to the sweets-starved Englishman, a fact that made him all the more resentful of his need to accept the rude foreigner's beneficence.

In gratuitous rudeness, inconsiderateness, and condescension of manner there is Grade-A material for anti-American sentiment and international bad feeling. They imply an affront to the dignity of the human spirit. The tourist who leaves a trail of such affronts behind him does our cause more harm than the classic hell-raiser from Main Street who makes a show of himself at the Rotonde or the Johnny-on-the-loose who seeks out the gyp-joints of Pigalle, then sets up a hue and cry because he has been charged $15 a bottle for dubious champagne. The latter can be charged off as profitable stock in trade of the tourist season, but the former does serious spiritual damage. He injures the faith that Europeans find vital as they labor to rebuild Europe.

The responsible tourist will not only watch his step in an effort to avoid giving rise to anti-American sentiment, but he will make allowances for conditions peculiar to the reconstruction period. Even before the war, for example, some of Europe's customs officials had their own strange concept of public relations. Postwar red tape has done nothing to improve the concept or the officials' dispositions; the tourist may as well be prepared to grin and bear it. Ration coupons and the regulations incidental to food, gasoline, and other shortages are an inconvenience—for the Ameri-



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can visitor only a temporary inconvenience. The same is true of currency controls. It takes a philosophical attitude to survive the minor irritations and complications growing out of the fact that all Western European countries, except possibly Switzerland, need dollar exchange.

Besides serving as a potential ambassador of good will, the American sightseer will play a considerable role in the recovery of Europe. It is estimated that he will spend nearly a billion dollars in Europe this year; he may bring $400 worth of duty-free purchases into the United States, an increase of $300 over previous years. His dollars should be a shoulder to the wheel of ERP. They will mean precious "hard" currency to help stabilize national economies and pay for essential imports. Their impact will help speed up the impetus which American taxpayers are giving to European recovery through the Marshall Plan.

Take Denmark as an illustration of how the American tourist dollar affects one of Europe's national economies. Denmark's principal exports—butter, cheese, eggs, and bacon—find their customers in the British Isles and other "soft" money countries. But Denmark's chief import necessities—automobiles, machinery, coal, and oil—come largely from a "hard" currency country like the United States. Because of this impasse between "hard" and "soft" currency the Danish economy has been slow to recover from the dislocations of the war and the Nazi occupation. American tourist dollars will help make up the "hard" money shortage.

In virtually all of Europe there is an illegal market for dollars. The difference between the legal rate of exchange and the black bourse quotations may be a matter of temptation to the lady from Dubuque and the gentleman from Indiana. Before yielding to the temptation the traveler ought to realize that every dollar he turns over to the black marketeer is sand in the wheels of the ERP. It is a dollar lost to the cause of world recovery and peace. And it may give the less public-spirited tourist pause to reflect (1) that the patron of the black bourse may get into serious difficulties with the law, and (2) that the paper which the black marketeer counts out to him in exchange for his dollars may prove to be worthless.

AFTER all he has heard about Europe's poverty, hardships, and austerity, the average tourist is bound to be shocked by the luxurious scale of living that he may see in some places

*—From "All Men Have Loved Thee."*

on the Continent, notably the Riviera. He indignantly wonders why the United States should have to dig down and pay for European recovery when Europeans have so much money to spend. If only for the sake of his blood pressure, he must realize that the luxury set is not typical—only a small fraction of one per cent of the population. Every country has profiteers and black marketeers. Into the bargain, not all of the profligate spenders are Europeans. Some are from the Levant, others from Latin America, many from our own country. Europeans like them as little as the American tourist does.

Before he finishes his tour of Europe's museums, cathedrals, and battlefields, the American may sometime be faced with an "incident." A friend of mine found himself in that position last summer in a certain Scandinavian city. He was sitting with fellow guests in front of his hotel watching a fireworks display when a party of young toughs came along and singled him out for anti-American abuse. My friend casually got up and went inside the hotel, probably the best way to handle that type of provocateur. "That never would have happened before the Nazi occupation," remarked a sympathetic local citizen. "Please don't hold their actions against our country." My friend reassured him. He had been in that city many times before the war and knew that the rowdyism was out of character. Besides, the "incident" could have been staged in more than one country in Europe these days. The visitor can only aim to avoid strengthening the hand of that minority.

Barring the possibility of war, the American tourist this year ought to have a successful trip to Europe. Prices are lower in most places; entertainment is abundant and food should be a little more plentiful. The official welcome mat is out. But even the veteran traveler may profit by a few suggestions:

1. Keep out of the black markets.
2. Tip sensibly. Lavish tipping antagonizes the vast majority who cannot compete with it.
3. If you go in for clip joints, be sporting enough to take the financial consequences.
4. Don't grouse about ration or currency regulations or protest the un-American size of food portions.
5. Don't judge a people by prostitutes and black marketeers.
6. Don't judge a whole nation by the anti-American minority. If you run into an anti-American "incident," try to handle it with composure, if not equanimity.
7. Steer a middle course: neither boast about America nor apologize for it.
8. Remember that Europe's distinctive character lies in tradition and not mechanical progress, and her present standard of living is below her prewar standard.
9. If you are not interested in leaving the impression that Americans are a friendly people who want to live in peace and build a better world, you had better do your traveling in the United States.
10. The most important thing the tourist can take with him on his trip is a sense of his responsibility as an American abroad.

Never has the American traveler had a better opportunity to work personally and constructively for world peace. He can help create the international atmosphere that encourages the cooperation of governments on a world scale.

*Henry C. Wolfe, free-lance writer and lecturer on international relations, recently returned from a trip abroad. He is author of several books, including "The German Octopus" (1938), "Human Dynamite" (1939), and "The Imperial Soviets" (1940).*



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# History as a Living Art

"WHEN John Citizen feels the urge to read history, he goes to the novels of Kenneth Roberts or Margaret Mitchell, not to the histories of Professor this or Doctor that. Why?" This challenging question comes from the opening paragraph of a brief but exciting pamphlet* by the Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison, who is, incidentally, both a professor and a doctor. Since Morison himself is one of the few contemporary American historians whose gracious mastery of the English language can rival that of Parkman, Prescott, and Motley in the nineteenth century, it will be well worth pausing a moment to listen to what this master historian has to say about "History as a Literary Art."

Professor Morison lashes out (but with such grace and wit!) at the "terrible stuff [that] passes for English in Ph.D. dissertations, monographs, and articles in the historical reviews . . ." And just for the malicious fun of it, he takes a sentence at random from the Bible (Isaiah xxii. 5: "For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity.") and to drive home his point translates it freely into current "academese": "It is an era of agitation, of a progressive decline in the standard of living, and of uncertainty as to the correct policy." This is only too well justified, as anyone who reads academic history writing will certainly agree.

But who reads our professional scholars of history? Aside from a handful of vigorous writers like Allan Nevins, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Bernard DeVoto, and Professor Morison himself, our academic historians write largely for each other. And as a consequence, they write with fear and trembling, for there is no more merciless, more biased, more intolerant critic of one's work in any field than one's own colleagues in that field. The historian who gains a wider public can let himself go, for the reading public is merciful, is tolerant, and, in the end, sound in judgment. But the wider his audience grows the more careful must the historian be before his fellow practitioners—for wit, and style, and originality of presentation or thought will be envied, and every slightest error will be pounced upon, and he will need the cockiness of a politician to face down his opponents. The result has been an unparalleled level of timidity and mediocrity in our historical writing.

We agree with Professor Morison when he writes in his pamphlet: "There is no fundamental cure for this except better teaching of English in our schools and by all teachers, *whatever their other subjects.*" The problem is also one of making our historians more responsive to the people—in this case, to the general reading public; to get them away from each other, if not geographically, at least intellectually.

Professor Morison will have the young hopefuls of the profession live full lives, learn to write well—and for others than their own kind. All this is to the good; but in our opinion there is still another consideration which is perhaps the most important of all. Our historians will never break out of their charmed circle unless their conception of what history consists of is broadened, not to say ennobled. What exactly is history, you ask yourself, trying to be objective about it, and what is it for? Is it the gathering of facts about the past? Is it the joy of correcting the errors of others who have written about the past? Is it the presentation of "new material" about the past, or of "new viewpoints" on established matters?

Perhaps it may be well to remember that history after all is a part of the present, the slipstream eddying behind the propeller of our collective lives as we make our way painfully into the future; that each age writes its history in its own image, because it has need of it; that this being so, it is the duty of an historian to cultivate objectivity without ever forgetting at any point that the history he is writing has a creative function for the years in which he is living. Or perhaps it may be well to view history as a progression without pause from the star-dust cloud in the universe which later became our planet, up through the vast reaches of what is now dismissed lightly as "prehistory," to the pinpoint moment in which we live, now. Archeology, anthropology, even "pure" sciences like astronomy and physics, will have much to contribute to the widening of historical horizons in this respect.

HISTORY again (and in a most instructive form, because contemporary) may be found scattered over the earth we live on today. Primitive societies still exist among the pygmies of Africa and the aborigines of Australia. The nomads of Central Asia—if they have not yet succumbed to sovietization—may instruct us in one of the earlier phases of civilization. In Peiping, the scholarly culture of Mandarin China persists—threatened, it is true, by the Communist forces of the new order outside the walls of this city of the past. And the pattern of medieval life may be found in all its intricate complexity throughout the Near East. The advance of history is painful and tortuous and leaves behind it pockets of survival which may instruct the eager historian who has eyes to see and the urge to interpret for his living fellows the forward path of mankind, wherever he may find it.

History can be a noble art; but first it must be approached with a freedom and a breadth of imagination which so far has been conspicuously absent among our professional scholars. History is all about us; history is imprisoned in the meteorite from outer space, in the archeologist's shard, and in the folksong of the Kentucky mountaineer; and history can speak to a wider audience than the learned few, and speak eloquently, if it is approached in this spirit. A broadened, humanized writing of history now will speak to the future; will record our conception of the age in which we live and of the past from which we came as we would wish to have it recorded. "Bring history, the most humane and noble form of letters, back to the proud position she once held," writes Professor Morison in the closing sentence of his pamphlet, "knowing that your words, if they be read and remembered, will enter into the stream of life, and perhaps move men to thought and action centuries hence, as do those of Thucydides after more than two thousand years."

C. C.

*HISTORY AS A LITERARY ART: An Appeal to Young Historians. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Old South Leaflets, Series II, No. 1. Published by the Old South Association, Boston, Mass.



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### "Don't Resign from the Human Race"

SIR: I just read—and reread—your fine editorial "Don't Resign From the Human Race" [*SRL* Aug. 7]. The highest praise I can offer is, "What can I do to help?"

Does the organization for world federation have a central office? If so, where?

JUNE BECKELMAN.

South Orange, N. J.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The headquarters of United World Federalists, Inc., is 7 East 12 Street, New York, N. Y.*

SIR: I am getting mighty tired of such appeals for world government as typified by Norman Cousins's editorial. Altogether too many people are wasting abilities, which might otherwise be diverted into useful channels, on that fatuous dream known as World Federation.

Do they ever consider whether a world government is even desirable? The verdict of history shows it to be the opposite. The Roman Empire was for all practical purposes a world government, and yet this empire could only stifle the freedom and sterilize the culture developed by the independent—and continually waning—city states of Classical Greece. And the final result was the Dark Ages with its anarchy, terror, and complete destruction of all that is good in human culture.

But World Federalists do not often claim that world government is desirable; rather they bleat that it is an absolute necessity to prevent World War III. In this statement they neglect two things:

1. That a world government can be accomplished only by a war of conquest or a series of them, as was the case of the Roman Empire and similar empires in China, India, Mexico, and Peru. To think that Russia will surrender its sovereignty to a US-dominated world parliament is worse than absurd; it is an example of the muddled thinking that is leading us into war. An American empire would destroy American democracy just as its Roman counterpart destroyed the Roman Republic. Or if Russia happened to win—it would be even worse.

2. Federalists neglect civil wars. The American Civil War was the greatest war of the nineteenth century, with the *possible* exception of some of the Napoleonic campaigns. The greatest wars of antiquity were those between Caesar and Pompey, Octavius and Mark Antony, Marius and Tulla. Countless Roman emperors strode to their thrones through a sea of blood. Federalists who love to analyze the Constitutional Convention seem to shy away from an analysis of the year 1861 when the Constitution failed.

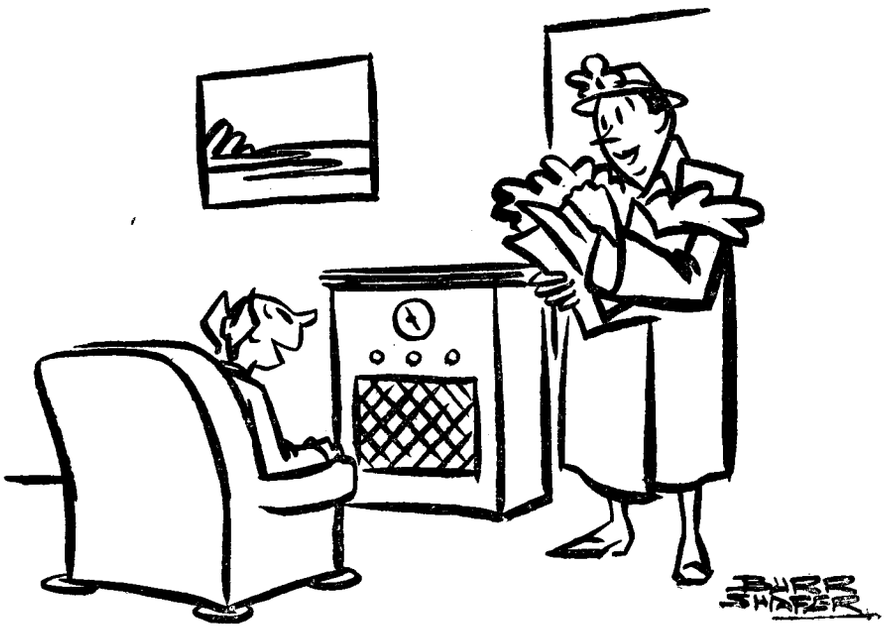
For Federalists to say that war can be prevented only by world government is—besides being an obvious untruth—a counsel of despair; for only war could bring about a world government.

It is time for Mr. Cousins and his intellectual cronies to take off their blinders and do something constructive for the cause of world peace.

PETER B. DENISON.

North Haven, Conn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *What would Mr. Denison suggest?*




**"While you were at the grocery, her father died and her ex-husband threatened her and her boy friend was sent up on a narcotics charge. Then tragedy struck."**

SIR: I have read your editorial not once but three times, and it seems to me that it should be read by all the people in the country who know how to read. Please think up some way in which this article can be spread over the largest possible area.

ELOISE WALDROP.

Staunton, Va.

### Translator

SIR: I was extremely pleased with the excellent and carefully evaluated review *SRL* gave to Jacques Laurent Bost's book "The Last Profession" Aug. 7, and was therefore somewhat shocked at the omission in the annotated material of my name as translator. If the publisher considers it worth his while to mention the translator's name—and my name is not exactly unknown in the book business—he must have sound reasons for it, and only as a matter of courtesy you might follow suit.

ALFRED VAN AMEYDEN VAN DUYM.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The slight couldn't have happened to a finer translator. We would have had responsible parties flogged except that mention of the translator in annotated material has not been in* SRL's *stylebook.*

### Quarter-Book Publishing

SIR: Bennett Cerf takes an inaccurate and unfair crack at the publishers of inexpensive paper bound books [*SRL* June 5]. His remarks are obviously based upon very superficial knowledge of the industry, except for the twenty-five cent house with which he is identified as a founder, advisor, author, and anthologist. The success of paper-bound publishing, as we observe it in our own business, is based on efficient methods of mass distribution, production, and maintenance of the twenty-five cent price for fiction. Instead of cheapening the quality of output, we have consistently improved our list—current titles including works by Arthur Koestler, A. N. Whitehead, James Weldon Johnson, and many daring ventures in putting scientific non-fiction and literary masterpieces for a selective audience on the mass market, by such authors as James Joyce, Bernard Shaw, Homer, Prof. R. H. Tawney, Julian Huxley, etc.

Mr. Cerf ignores the extraordinary series of authoritative reference books published by Pocket Books and The New American Library, which are consistently kept in print, and proceeds to state that twenty-five-cent book publishing has become a one-shot operation with only the sensational successes reprinted. As we write this letter, The New American Library is putting Ruth Benedict's "Patterns of Culture" on the press for the fourth large printing in two years; "Good Reading," by the Committee on College Reading, on the press for the third large printing in seven months; R. H. Tawney's "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism" on the press for the second large printing in six months. In the spring of 1948, obviously the period on which Mr. Cerf's evidence must have been based, our firm published "Christ Stopped at Eboli"; Joyce's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"; "Sweden: the Middle Way," by Marquis Childs; "Philoso-



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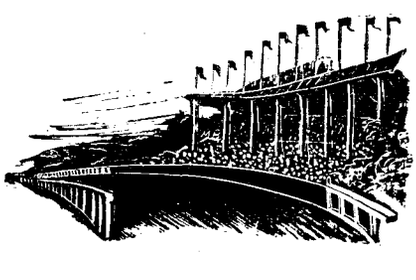
phy in a New Key," by Susanne Langer; "Tragic Ground," by Erskine Caldwell; "Strange Fruit," by Lillian Smith; also "The Wild Palms," by William Faulkner, originally published by Random House, of which Mr. Cerf is the head. In the same period we contracted for the works of a number of promising newer writers, including Mr. Cerf's discovery Truman Capote. Mr. Cerf's challenge that "the time has come for the publishers of twenty-five-cent books to do some voluntary housecleaning" obviously cannot be applied to our Signet books or Mentor books, or indeed to the current list of our principal competitor, Pocket Books. The following statement by Mr. Cerf is utterly false: "Where once they attempted to keep titles in stock indefinitely, and spent much of their time seeking reorders on old titles from their dealers, they are content today to publish a single edition of anywhere from a hundred thousand to a million copies of a title, and then forget it. Only the one sensational success out of twenty or thirty offerings is reprinted at all. In other words, this has become a one-shot operation, and is much closer today to the magazine field than book publishing." We are constantly reprinting more than a score of old titles so as to keep our back list in print. It is true that the mechanics of magazine distribution make it necessary to withdraw titles from newsstand circulation after a certain sales period is over. That doesn't mean that those titles are taken from the publisher's list. Practically all of them remain available on special order for bookstores, colleges, etc. The back list of the twenty-five-cent publishers is probably more completely available than that of most hard-cover publishers, and no title genuinely in demand is permitted to go out of print. Indeed, one of our constant embarrassments is to try to find the trade edition of a good book to send to the printer after we have selected it by reading a library copy. Such was the case with Faulkner's "The Wild Palms," for the production of which we borrowed Random House's autographed file copy.

Bennett Cerf complains about the pictures on the covers. He obviously forgets that twenty-five-cent books are not sold by salesmen, advertising, etc., but exclusively by displays. Therefore, we have to follow magazine practice in designing covers which appeal to the public and sell the contents of the book. A pretty girl on the cover of a love story is certainly not less permissible than on a magazine. Change of title, although not a desirable practice, is sometimes unavoidable for the same reasons. Some titles of original editions are not always descriptive enough for books sold entirely by display. The title change of "The Case of Mr. Crump," to which Mr. Cerf refers,



was necessary because on the newsstand that title would have been considered more appropriate for a mystery or a book about Boss Crump of Memphis. Since the book has appeared under a number of titles in Europe where it was first published, the author, Ludwig Lewisohn, and his original publisher, Farrar, Straus, cooperated in the selection of a title which precisely describes the theme of the novel: "The Tyranny of Sex."

Most uncalled for is Bennett Cerf's warning to twenty-five-cent publishers to do some voluntary housecleaning in order not to sabotage the efforts of original publishers in battling reactionaries and self-appointed censors. After all, almost the entire output of the twenty-five-cent book industry consists of reprints originally published by hard-cover publishers. We believe that our industry not only represents important and immediate subsidiary income for trade publishers and their authors, but that our industry promotes the popular audience of contemporary authors in a way which has greatly enhanced sales of those authors' newer works when issued by trade publishers and intermediate hard-cover reprint publishers. Many of the authors whose books we have reprinted have felt slandered by Mr. Cerf's remarks—and one of them in particular, Erskine Caldwell, has special justification for feeling injured, since "God's Little Acre," now over the four-million mark in our edition, has long been a feature on the Modern Library list.

I am sure that our friendly competitors in the paper-bound book industry could add to the evidence of The New American Library in refutation of Mr. Cerf's gratuitous attack.

THE NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY,
KURT ENOCH, *President*,
VICTOR WEYBRIGHT, *Chairman*.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: Mr. Enoch and Mr. Weybright seem to have misunderstood the purpose of my paragraphs on twenty-five-cent books. As they point out, I am myself a very interested party, anxious to see profits continue in that line. Furthermore, my knowledge, they know perfectly well, is far from "superficial." As a matter of fact, I know exactly where the bodies are hidden, and that certainly isn't on the jacket illustrations of the kind of titles I questioned.

The low price of these books brings them within reach of millions of people—particularly very young ones—who could not or would not buy the very much more expensive "original" editions. Educators, not to mention censors, church officials, postal inspectors, and policemen have given ample evidence that they are aware of this fact. Some of the publishers have not.

I singled out no one publisher of quarter books for criticism. Why do Mr. Enoch and Mr. Weybright protest so much? Readers of *SRL* need rely on neither their statistics nor mine to determine the quality of the bulk of quarter-book releases today. Let them drop into any book, drug, or stationery store that handles a representative assortment and decide for themselves!

BENNETT CERF.

Provincetown, Mass.

## *Correction*

In THE PHOENIX NEST for July 5, 1947, William Rose Benét published a sonnet sent him by Arthur Stringer, who was at that time engaged in preparing a biography of Rupert Brooke. Mr. Stringer attributed the authorship of the poem to Brooke. It was, he said, Brooke's last work, written while the poet was aboard the transport *Grantully Castle*, a few days before his death in the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915.

Upon the basis of evidence since submitted by Ernest Raymond, the well-known British novelist, Mr. Benét, Mr. Stringer, and the editors of *SRL*, are convinced that the sonnet is actually the work of Ernest Raymond. It was composed in 1921 and first published the following year on the title page and in the text of his novel "Tell England." Mr. Stringer is now convinced that his source of information about the poem was misinformed.

The version of the sonnet printed in THE PHOENIX NEST was incorrect in certain respects. The correct version as written by Ernest Raymond is as follows:

For all emotions that are tense and strong,
And utmost knowledge, I have lived for these—
Lived deep, and let the lesser things live long,
The everlasting hills, the lakes, the trees,
Who'd give their thousand years to sing this song
Oh Life, and Man's high sensibilities,
Which I into the face of Death can sing—
O, Death, thou poor and disappointed thing—

Strike if thou wilt, and soon; strike breast and brow;
For I have lived: and thou canst rob me now
Only of some long life that ne'er has been.
The life that I have lived, so full, so keen,
Is mine! I hold it firm beneath thy blow
And, dying, take it with me where I go.

Mr. Benét, Mr. Stringer, and the editors of *SRL* greatly regret any inconvenience that publication of the baseless story and incorrect version of the sonnet may have caused Ernest Raymond.



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## FICTION

(Continued from page 12)

played on a tessellated court with, as living pieces, pretty dancing girls, "their breasts uncovered in the Balinese manner." The tenseness of the situation is too much for our heroine, who is present. As the checker pieces are reduced to one on a side, she begs the Radja to be allowed to take the place of the last remaining dancing girl and ends the game by swooning yieldingly from the board into the arms of her waiting lover.

The fun is marred by the book being somewhat too long to maintain the high levels of comedy it occasionally reaches, as well as by a certain straightforwardness in descriptive passages and some of the narrative, which gives rise to the hideous thought that both the author and the publishers intend it to be taken seriously.

## *Vale of Hope*

*ABIDE WITH ME. By Cedric Belfrage. New York: William Sloane Assocs. 1948. 351 pp. $3.50.*

Reviewed by MAX WILK

THIS "serio-comic novel deals with the undertaking profession in what the author may have thought to be witty and hilarious satire. After 351 pages of variations on a mortuary theme, the net result is a profound sense of depression. As for the satire, there undoubtedly exists an appreciative audience of ghouls and necrophiles amongst us who will pounce on "Abide with Me" with relish. But if this was Mr. Belfrage's aim, his sights couldn't have been lower.

The story traces the rise of the Hope family, and, more specifically, Lincoln Hope, from the small Midwest town where his father, Andrew, did part-time embalming before the First World War, up to 1949, when Lincoln has established an elaborate Vale of Hope Memorial Park, and is on his way to Mexico, and new corpses to conquer.

This subject for a novel has already been touched upon lightly by Aldous Huxley in "After Many a Summer Dies the Swan," and not so lightly by Evelyn Waugh in "The Loved One." The satiric discussion of the commercialization of death in America by these two brilliant writers makes for entertaining and pointed satire. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for "Abide with Me." Peppered as it is throughout with unending physical

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details of cremation, embalming, preparation of corpses for burial, and other such vivid detail, the novel soon becomes a test for the reader with a touchy stomach, and a trial as well. Its insistence on naturalistic detail often blunts whatever satiric darts Mr. Belfrage has to offer.

Through this lurid funeral procession parades a collection of subsidiary characters of whose creation the best thing that can be said is that very few of them occupy many pages. Lincoln Hope, the single-minded hero, whose desire to "go into partnership with God" by creating a cemetery unsurpassed throughout America, is too much of an American fictional stereotype. He rarely emerges as a human being. More often, he fades into the anonymity of a black-coated undertaker, faceless as a Dali nun, as lacking in character as one of the pieces of statuary dotting his own Vale of Hope.

The quality of Mr. Belfrage's prose, which is high enough to indicate an occasional successful island of wit, cannot ever rise sufficiently above the murkiness of the subject he has chosen. Now that he has sufficiently explored this abysmal crypt, let him find a more worthy subject for his undoubted talents.

# *Auld Sod and American Dream*

*THE PARISH AND THE HILL. By Doyle Curran. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.* 1948. 221 *pp.* $3.

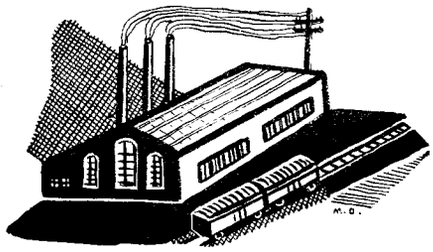
Reviewed by HARRY BULL

IT is almost as difficult to know how to appraise these highly personal memories of an Irish-American childhood as it is to handle an Irish-American workman exerting his voluble charm to prove that your idea must be carried out his way or not at all.

As inconsistent and diversified as people long and intimately observed, Mrs. Curran's fictitious friends and relations at first baffle the subsurface-reader, the reader who wants from fiction more than mere escape, in the same way they must have baffled the child Mary who found herself growing up among them. But as we begin to see that this little girl gradually acquired all her positive characteristics from her mother and grandfather, we discover that events and characters are reported with a remarkably accurate reference to her earlier outlook, and we can add our own judgment to savor the fuller significance of developments.

Sometimes with nostalgia, sometimes with dramatic impact, Mrs. Curran's story tells of Grandfather O'Sullivan's migration from Kerry and of the two succeeding generations that tried to make their way in a New England mill town. Mrs. Curran, now an English teacher at Wellesley, supplies all the signposts, but unless we are content merely to enjoy the rich flow of emotional scenery, to identify ourselves with figures presented poetically against a landscape, we shall have to find our own way through the parish and the hill.

The former locale is the section settled by the immigrants. With its overcrowded tenements, its bars bursting with convivial and belligerent "harps," it remains the home of the shanty Irish after the successful followers of the shrewd Yankees have turned into lace-curtain Irish, with addresses on Money Mole Hill. Little Mary's own family is violently torn between the traditional pull of the auld sod from the wake-ridden parish and the appeal of the American dream, advertising version, as exemplified by the hill. But if the girl views the struggle as one between spirit and matter, between a rich, imaginative culture and the imitation of a threadbare heritage, we are still shown enough of the rest of the picture to see that it is much more complicated than that. Loyally as she upholds every stand of her grandfather and mother, Mary still lets us see that this favorite daughter was the only one of John O'Sullivan's seventeen children who made any sort of a good life. And even with her great natural humanity, her warmth and compassion, Mary's mother seems so ignorant and superstitious, so hopeless a judge of character and of the consequences of a given line of behavior, that after a long courtship she still marries a dour, totally uncongenial man and then proceeds to spoil their children. When she has finally struck the worst of them with a poker (with at least the momentary sympathy of the reader), we begin to realize that it was training in reality that she most lacked. Certainly she was humble enough to try to face the facts, but where had she ever been given the chance to learn how? Bigger in spirit





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than the community priests, she adjusted to life as well as she did in spite of the deliberate limitations of church and parochial schools, in spite of the neglect implicit in so large and poor a family, in spite of the bitterness of exploitation by the mill owners.

Like her father before her, Mary shines forth as a rare beacon of the Celtic spirit not turned to bitterness by years of opposition to the English. In the midst of the pervading atmosphere of Coughlinism, John O'Sullivan and his daughter have no need to bolster any sense of inferiority to Anglo-Saxons here or abroad by stooping to attack races still a step below them on the social ladder.

The less appealing relatives, including seven alcoholic brothers, of whom several belong to the plentiful Irish type whose whole personality seems to be corroded with a negative charge, they too are scattered through "The Parish and the Hill."

Mary Curran the author has, at least unconsciously, used her gift for dialogue and character, her appreciation of both the wit and the lyricism in her people, to illumine one of the American minority problems that has still to be faced realistically before it can be entirely resolved.

## *Intrigue in Michigan*

*RAVENSWOOD. By Mary Frances Doner. New York: Doubleday & Co.* 1948. 254 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by EDWIN SEAVER

WITH auctorial eye in a fine frenzy rolling, Mary Frances Doner has written a feverish novel of love and sin, of intrigue, jealousy, and the lust for power in the Blue River country of Michigan. "Ravenswood" is a thickly-plotted, thickly-populated chronicle of a family in whose past, apparently, more has happened than meets the eye. Unfortunately, the skeletons in the St. George closet are too obviously simulated to frighten us; and the evil so unconvincing, the retribution so unshattering, we are not so much purged by pity and terror as by boredom. There is a lot of sound and fury, signifying very little.

The fortunes of the St. George family are founded, not on a rock but upon salt, and this gives Miss Doner an opportunity to slip in some information about one of the major industries in the Great Lakes region—quite the most interesting reading, incidentally, in "Ravenswood." The novel opens with thunder and lightning and what the author tries to build up as a brooding sense of evil. We are thereupon, after an introduction that reads like a resumé of preceding installments of the story and the characters involved in it, plunged into the intricate involvements of several generations of the St. George family. At either end this family would seem to be quite all right; the founding grandfather was a fine, upstanding gentleman, and his grandson Thad is a veritable young knight in shining armor, born to slay the dragon of failure, restore the family fortune, and have an altogether brilliant future.

If this reviewer were to tell the reader who was the illegitimate child of whom, he would be guilty of giving away the plot. Perish the thought! However, somebody did somebody wrong in one generation and, his offspring's teeth being set on edge, he proceeded to do somebody else a little wrong on his own. There's the crack in this not very subtly imagined Michigan house of Atreus.

To sum up, "Ravenswood" is a slick magazine novel "famoused up" with somber overtones that never amount to much more than stage directions or window dressing.

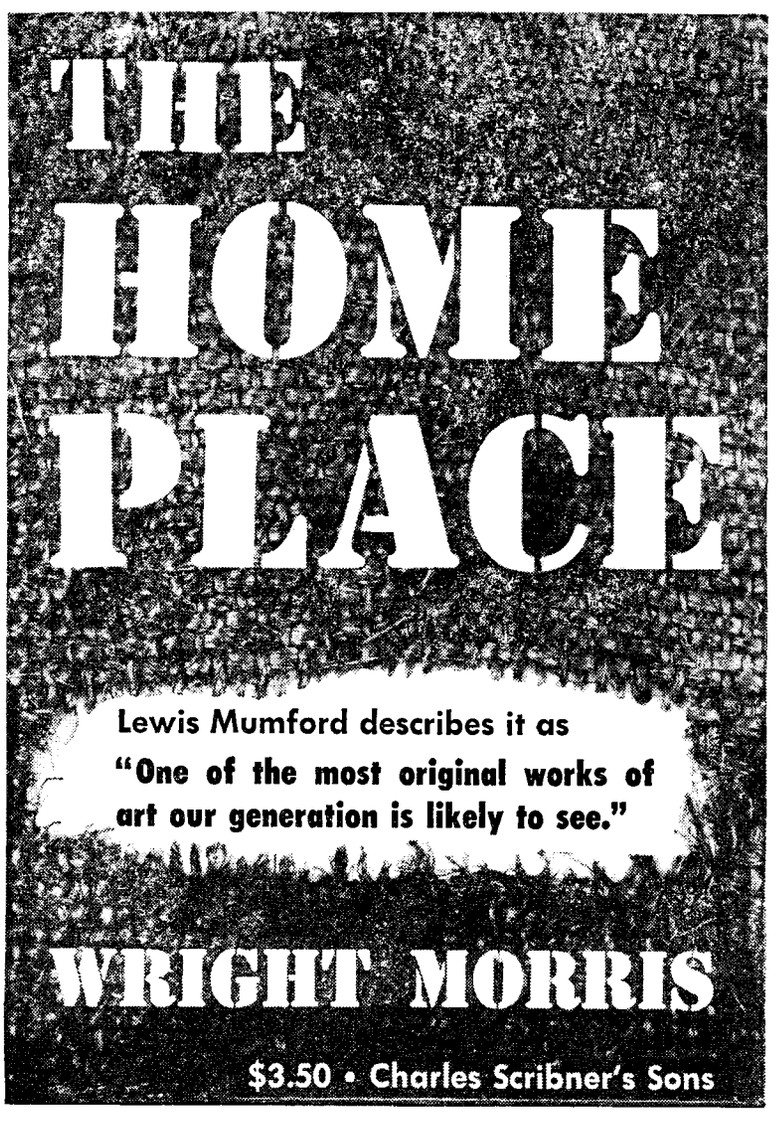
## *In a Serene World*

*THE WASHBOURNES OF OTTERLEY. By Humphrey Pakington. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.* 1948. 303 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PAMELA TAYLOR

ENJOYMENT being highly contagious, it seems likely that a good time will be had by all who read "The Washbournes of Otterley," for it is quite obvious that the author has thoroughly enjoyed creating this period piece which might so easily have been quaint or sentimental but is, in the end, deftly amusing. Content to let other novelists shock, startle, or arouse their readers, Mr. Pakington goes on adding to his list of highly entertaining tales, iridescent with nimble and subtle humor.

"The Washbournes of Otterley" carries us, in the span of 1845 to 1895, through three generations of one family, serenely happy in its ownership, since the days of Henry VII, of its beautiful Severnshire estate. Inevi-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tably, as this is a novel of upper-class Victorian life in England, marriage is important. It is, in fact, of prime concern to Sir William, the tenth Baronet, and his Lady. Their two children, Tom and Fanny, are expected to carry out the Washbourne tradition of early and desirable marriages. How both make, according to their parents' standards, *mésalliances*, how Fanny's indiscretion is rewarded in the end with prosperity, fame, a wholly Victorian quantity of children, and a peer as a son-in-law, is balanced, with the irony which Mr. Pakington employs with devastating and amiable effect, by poor Tom's debacle.

The third generation of the Washbournes and their neighbors spreads out in an intricate web of marriages; there is much matchmaking, most of which goes awry, to the confusion of all concerned. No one writes more engaging love scenes than Mr. Pakington; nor more agreeably of husband and wife in intimate conversation.

"The Washbournes" is generously studded with county entertainments, which we enjoy the more because they are nostalgically symbolic of times of security and tradition which will not come soon again, and because, for all their faint ridiculousness, they really sound like fun: the County Ball, the annual review of the Queen's Own Severnshire Yeomanry, the meeting of the Archery Society. There is, too, Sir William's ineffable political career, progressing from Lord Warden of the Privy Closet, to Waterways and Wharfage, to the Admiralty, and climaxed by his review of the Fleet, in the company of Her Gracious Majesty, from the Royal Yacht. That, like Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., he was forced to "seek the seclusion that a cabin grants," despite the three hard-boiled eggs at breakfast recommended as a sure preventive by his spouse, is somehow Sir William's most typical moment.

"The Washbournes of Otterley" deals with a period during which, as Virginia Woolf has said, the human model did not change. Through it the serene security of a world free of pressures and anxieties slants like sunlight across the trees of Otterley Park. By turns funny, touching, and unexpectedly vivid, this novel is thoroughly agreeable because of the author's approach to his human beings. However ridiculous he finds them, he regards them with affection.

**Erratum**

John O'Hara's "Appointment in Samarra," recently mentioned in *SRL* as a Harcourt, Brace book, is published, rather, by Duell, Sloan & Pearce. A new edition is just out.

## MY BROTHER, SHERWOOD ANDERSON

*(Continued from page 7)*

That Sunday Sherwood got on very well with the pugnacious and affirmative man, his host, Floyd Dell. For a period the two saw a great deal of each other, and it was through Dell that Sherwood met other members of the famous "Chicago group," including Theodore Dreiser, whom he came to consider his best friend.

Sherwood acknowledged to me that for a long time he had not the courage to tell Floyd Dell that he had written a novel. One evening in Sherwood's apartment, fortified by a few cocktails, he made his confession.

"Hell and damnation!" Dell exclaimed. "If I didn't like you, Sherwood, this would be the last straw. Come on, let's get it over with at once!"

Floyd Dell lay sprawled on Sherwood's bed that night and read "Windy McPherson's Son." The next day he wrote an editorial for his paper to this effect: that he had read an unpublished novel by an unknown author with a gift of rare imagery—a man to be watched in American literature.

Credit has been given to many for helping Sherwood Anderson get a publisher; he himself chose to give Dreiser his greatest thanks. I do know that during the years the novel was in manuscript, it passed under many eyes and suffered numerous recommendations. Sherwood sent it to me to place in New York, but my acquaintances in literary commerce were few and, apparently, unperceptive. At last some woman in London who had read the book—my impression is that that woman was Rebecca West—told John Lane, the publisher, about it; gave her enthusiasm freely to him at a dinner party. In any event, Lane cabled his New York house to make a contract with Sherwood for it and his next book.

When "Windy McPherson's Son" was published in 1916, some critics said they detected in it marks of Henry Fielding, while others saw the influence of the Russians. The latter observation astonished Sherwood, so he told me, because he had not read, at the time, a single Russian writer.

The royalties of Sherwood's first four books—the fourth of them was "Winesburg, Ohio"—came to less than $400. (Later he was fond of saying, "I am the most talked about, most unread, most unbought author in America.") It became necessary for him to go back to writing advertisements. Creation was his sideline; he composed stories in his mind during business hours, made notes on his cuffs, and wrote by night. He thought of himself as an amateur who could afford nonconformity. "I am damn well writing what I like!" he wrote me.

Winesburg, O., was of course our boyhood town of Clyde. The characters in the book were suggested by certain personages in Clyde, but the stories were born of his imagination. Many critics and readers have taken Sherwood literally, have understood as authentic "Gospel truth" his own relating of himself and his everchanging environment. They have ignored his warning on this. "I am destined," he once said, "to follow a crooked, unchaste path through the forest of my fancy"; and he also wrote, "I shall probably never resort to exact truth of my people. . . . With me the spirit of people and the selection of my accounts of them is that which counts." I remember a visit Sherwood and Irving paid me, at my home in Connecticut, later in our lives. As we sat on the lower porch step in the spring sunlight, Sherwood related some incident that I had observed at first hand. I contradicted him on the exactness of his tale.

"Let him alone, Karl," Irving urged in an undertone. "I'd like to hear him tell it again to see what it would be like this time."

IN the early Twenties, Sherwood received $150 a week as a retainer from Horace Liveright, the book publisher, so he was secure financially. It was in 1924 that he wrote me, asking me to come to Ripshin, his home in Virginia. He needed my advice, he wrote. When I arrived, he told me he was thinking of buying two small newspapers in Marion, Va. I told him I thought he was foolish to consider tying himself down to such a demanding function as that of country editor.

"But you know, Karl," he said, "that $150 a week of Liveright's worries me. "I keep thinking about the damn check being on the way and about all the writing I'm not doing because of thinking about the check. I can write well only when I write to please myself."

I had nothing to say to that, of course.

Later, Sherwood sold the manuscript of one of his published books for $3,000 and used the proceeds as a down payment for the newspapers.

Often I have wondered why Sherwood did not write the story of our brother Earl, the queer one, who had shuttled between living with Sherwood



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and with me, then had suddenly declared his wish to be independent of us, a desire to be on his own. He walked out of our lives and nothing was heard of him, not a word, for the next thirteen years. Then he was picked up in a New York street, the victim of a stroke, but alive. Sherwood was in another part of the country then, and it was for me to tell him the tragic details of the finding of Earl. During Earl's last years, we were able to reconstruct the gap of thirteen years: he had been a sailor, an unsuccessful commercial artist, a helper in a bakery. He had been so proud that when he once saw Sherwood—then at the height of his fame—pass a few feet ahead of him on the street, he had scurried out of sight.

Years later, sitting in Sherwood's writing room, a one-room log cabin perched on the top of a mountain, at Ripshin, I asked him why he had never written the story of Earl, as I had told it to him, giving the words of my poor mining into his keeping. He did not answer. My mind brushed against the reason of his silence. Finally he rose and stood in the doorway, looking toward a range of far mountains, and from there drawled his low, dubious reply: "For a long time I've been mulling it over in my mind."

I sensed he did not want to talk about it. I got my answer a few days later. We were having breakfast in an open patio at his home, a stone house he had built at the foot of a mountain, by a racing stream. A number of Sherwood's friends were together there: Jim Boyd, Tom Wolfe, and a writer from Spain who had come to see about translating "Winesburg, Ohio," into Spanish. Dogs were about our feet, and our conversation turned to their merits as companions.

Each man told his story, and I dared a factual tale of a red setter I once owned that never learned to heel. I told it not too well, I thought; so I was pleasantly surprised to have Sherwood say, "Karl, you managed to get perfect form in relating your story!"

Soon afterward the group dispersed, each man going to one of the small one-room shacks Sherwood had built for those of his guests who chose to write.

At midday we were again about the table, and I felt a lack of gaiety in Sherwood, as well as in the others, and I wondered at this. My brother sent a stern look my way and said, "Karl, that dog story of yours spoiled my morning for me."

"How come?" I asked.

"I tried to write it," he replied, with a wry smile of defeat.

Each man at the table acknowledged that he, too, had tried and failed.

For the first time I realized there

was a difference between the spoken tale and the written one; that a writer wrote best of experiences and creations of his own. I knew then why Sherwood had never tried to write the story of Earl, as I had given it to him. More than that, it came to me that the queer characters dominant in the Winesburg tales came partly from Sherwood's preoccupation with his long departed brother. Throughout the lyrical perfection of the book was an undertone of remembrance. He *did* write about Earl. But Sherwood was not one to press within his being a withered flower of memory. Life, not death, was the essence of his being. Life was for him the great experience.

Now Sherwood Anderson has been gone for seven years, and life for me is not what it was while he lived. I hope that Sherwood has found again that which he sought; that this merry, seldom moody, often whimsical man has found fresh fields for his imagery; that he has found in heaven, too, stories that want telling.

I, in fancy, see myself as making the journey into the valley where he lives, and finding Sherwood sitting on a log by a sloping path, waiting for me. His shoulders are hunched—in meditation—and his eyes and mind are wholly upon a spider weaving a web. He, too, no doubt, feels himself as in mid-air, suspended from a murdock leaf, an infinitesimal creature hanging in midtime. Even if his body were hidden and only his hands seen, even then I should have known it was he, known him by the awkward manner of his holding a cigaret, as if he had something repellent and were undecided about whether to hold it or drop it.

He turns and sees me. His black eyes flicker a chiding: "You have kept me waiting"; a look of boyish accusation. He leisurely rises. Sherwood takes me by the arm and leads me down the path, saying, "Ma sent me out to get you, to bring you home. Everyone of us is there but you!"

# The Film Forum

## Exotic Lands

***The Saturday Review's* Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAST OF BOMBAY<br>Dodge Division of Chrysler Corp.<br>(30 minutes. Black and white.) | A territory little known to our civilization has been filmed bringing to the screen for the first time a religious festival in a Tibetan monastery high in the Himalayas. In Benares, Holy City of India, we see funeral rites conducted in the Ganges River, where natives bathe to cleanse their souls. Many strange and weird customs are shown giving us an insight into the influence of religious customs on the everyday life of the people. |
| WHEELS ACROSS AFRICA<br>Dodge Division of Chrysler Corp.<br>(30 minutes. Black and white.) | Sailing from Antwerp, another Denis-Roosevelt expedition lands at Morocco to start a motor caravan across Africa. In Morocco, we are entertained by street fakirs eating fire and broken glass. The film—following the expedition across the Atlas Mountains, and through the great Sahara Desert, and on to the Congo—affords exciting scenes of wild life. |
| WHEELS ACROSS INDIA<br>Dodge Division of Chrysler Corp.<br>(33 minutes. Black and white.) | An adventurous visit to the world's most densely populated country. Leila Roosevelt and Armand Denis, the famed explorers, filmed beautiful pagodas and gem-encrusted temples of Rangoon. In the dead city of Padung, "giraffe-necked" women maintain the ancient styles of their ancestors. Startling scenes of snake-worship with the King Cobra being kissed by the high priestess reveal strange practices in this exotic land. |

A. BERTRAND CHANNON.

For information about the purchase or rental of any films, please write to Film Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45 Street, New York 19, N. Y.



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# BOOKED for TRAVEL

## SEEING AMERICA, SITTING DOWN

LET'S rule out the guy who first tied a raccoon to the radiator of a convertible coupe. Then, after him, I would list as the three most important factors in the development of the American automobile the self-starter, the dashboard cigarette lighter, and the American Automobile Association.

The first made the automobile a friend rather than a treacherous foe to be approached warily with a crank-handle. The second permitted man to light a cigarette without wrapping himself and vehicle around a tree, a truly great contribution.

The AAA soothed the motorist's pride through the harrowing "Hey, get a horse!" era. Subsequently, it gave him the prestige that comes with a lobby in Washington and forty-eight state capitals. It pulled dues-paying members out of the mud, changed their flat tires, told those who couldn't read road maps where and how to go. It was, in many respects, better than joining Rotary—you got a shiny emblem to wear on the car and you didn't have to eat lunch in the hotel every Friday.

And now, with the publication of "Guide to America,"* the AAA leaps from the first page of the telephone directory into the role of American Baedeker. If this seems a strange venture for an automobile association, let the reader be advised that the AAA is now operating through its state and local clubs what is probably the most profitable (percentagewise) and rapidly growing travel agency in the business.

"Guide to America" is a whopping big guide book—705 standard-size pages crammed full of information, tabulated by states, cities, hamlets. It gives a bit of history, geography, early and late Americana, some of it quite exciting; a touch of industrial data from chambers of commerce, things you ought to know about national parks, shrines, and what the guide books call "points of interest." It lists some "points of interest" that are to me of questionable interest, but then it takes all kinds of people, they always say, to crowd the highways on Sunday.

Even if you're not planning on going anywhere, if you get fun out of browsing through the "World Almanac," then you'll enjoy browsing through "Guide to America." It is slanted for the motorized holidayer, naturally, since this treasury of information was edited by Elmer Jenkins, national travel director of the AAA.

An evening of vicarious travel with Mr. Jenkins and his men collaborators stirred up provocative dreams of all the places to go see if there were only another week of vacation left. And the thought was this: everybody (or so it seems) is writing books about where to go; why doesn't someone write a book on "How to Drive"?

AAA statisticians glibly estimate that twenty million of the thirty million cars now at large in this country are being used sometime this year for holiday trips. That means, conservatively, at least nineteen million drivers who need just such a book, even though they won't admit it. What a market for some enterprising book club!

Who's going to write it? It would take several people. Drivers like the soft-spoken chap from Montana who had a splitting headache all the while he was in New York—too many horns blowing.

"I get traffic frustration driving around the East," he said. "Out home we think nothing of driving forty miles to a movie, twenty of them over deeply rutted one-track roads; or of going 200 miles for dinner on paved highways. Your towns are too close together, and so are your cars. And so are the ears of your motorists. The only traffic laws we violate out West are the speed regulations. You people violate all the laws and still you don't go very fast or get very far. I'm going home quick."

—Ward Allan Howe.

**Washington, D. C.—"Most people . . . don't drive. They just sit and steer, and blow the horn."**

Another of the authors of this great work could be the New York State trooper who patrols thirty miles of Adirondack Mountain roads. He would like to teach the American motorist "to drive by the seat of his pants" the way post-Wright Brothers aviators flew their instrumentless planes. "Most those people out there," he pointed in disgust at the cars whizzing past, "they don't drive. They just sit and steer, and blow the horn."

Still another contributor could be the chap behind the counter of one of the touring-service offices operated in midtown Manhattan by the gasoline companies. He asks for the rights to the chapter on mileage and geography, for the special benefit of a resident of the Atlantic Seaboard who wrote: "Please map a route for me. I have a two-week vacation coming up and I am planning on driving to Alaska."

The last chapter must be given over to over-the-road truck and bus drivers who are too busy trying to make a living to play tag with frivolous holidayers on wheels. Their comments would surely get our book banned in Boston. We'd be a cinch to sell nineteen million copies.

PAUL J. C. FRIEDLANDER.

*Paul J. C. Friedlander, travel editor of* The New York Times, *is guest editor of* BOOKED FOR TRAVEL *this week while Horace Sutton is on vacation.*

**GUIDE TO AMERICA. Edited by Elmer Jenkins. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press. 1948. 705 pp. $5.*

## TRAVELERS' TALES

### *U. S. A.*

*NORTHWEST CORNER. Photographs by Henry Sheldon. Commentary by Stewart Holbrook. New York: Doubleday & Co.* 1948. *Unpaged.* $3.95.

THE Northwest Corner in question is the Pacific Northwest, and in portraying it Sheldon, Holbrook, and Doubleday have proved an unbeatable combination. Mr. Sheldon's pictures, reproduced in bleed-page offset, are simple, beautiful, outdoorsy. Stewart Holbrook's introduction and subsequent cut-lines avoid the commonplace as well as the affected. Sample: "Then there is the rich and rolling grain country around Davenport where farms are large and population sparse. This was also the end of the trail for Harry Tracy, the Northwest Corner's



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best remembered badman, who was run to earth in a wheat field here and committed suicide."

*HERE ROLLED THE COVERED WAGONS. By Albert and Jane Salisbury. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co.* 1948. 249 *pp.* $6.75.

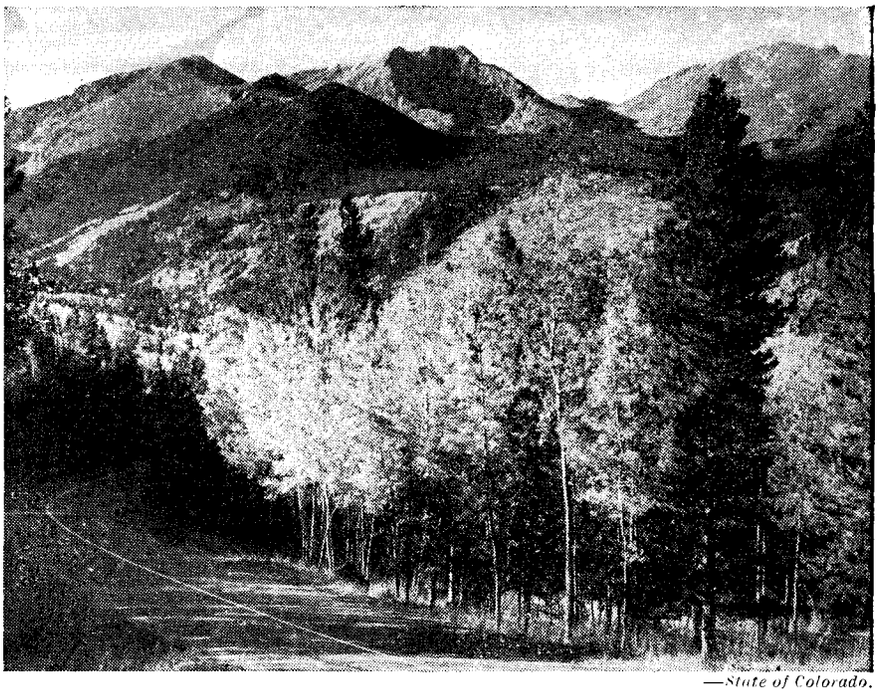
Starting in Yellowstone, the Salisburys have mapped a trail used by early settlers that winds through Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Montana. They have made seventy stops to chronicle the events that happened there and to make a photograph. The text is interesting enough, historically, but the pictures, many of them of monuments, technically and artistically just aren't very good. What's more, the reproduction is rather poor considering the book is printed on coated stock and sells for $6.75.

*MOUNTAINEERS HANDBOOK: The Techniques of Mountain Climbing. Compiled by members of the Mountaineers Club of the State of Washington. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co.* 1948. 160 *pp.* $3.

For forty-two years members of the Mountaineers Club have been climbing with piton, crampon, and camera through the mountains, forests, and glaciers of the Pacific Northwest. For a dozen years the club has conducted climbing courses to teach new members the esoteric art of getting up and down a rocky mountain in one piece. Now the organization has consolidated its accumulated experience, instruction, and advice—on the kind of clothing, boot nails, ice axe, ropes, packs, and sample menus—into this handy, illustrated handbook. It tells one who would climb a mountain—in the Northwest, the Northeast, or the Alps—what he should know. It also indicates that there are people who get a great deal of pleasure out of tying themselves together in order to get to the other side of a big hill.

*HUNTING AND FISHING IN THE GREAT SMOKIES. By Jim Gasque. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.* 1948. 210 *pp.* $3.75.

If there is a hunter or a fisherman in your family, this is the answer to what to give him for his birthday or for Christmas. Or just to keep him from retelling his own fish stories. For Jim Gasque's stories are better, and bigger, than the ordinary fisherman can stock, and he throws in bear hunting and boar hunting as well. Fair warning: be prepared, if you give this book to the head of the house, to spend your next vacation in the Great Smoky Mountains.



—State of Colorado.

**Trail Ridge Road, USA's highest continuous auto highway—Some "people get great pleasure out of tying themselves together to get to the other side of a big hill."**

## *Latin America*

*GRANDFATHER VS. PERU. By Walter Beebe Wilder. New York: Doubleday & Co.* 1948. 273 *pp.* $2.75.

Mr. Wilder has turned in much the same kind of work that David Dodge wrote in "How Green Was My Father" and the more recent "How Lost Was My Week End." The plan in all these cases has been to map a tour through some Latin-American country using one or more undependables as the protagonists of humorous misadventures with local law and custom. Mr. Dodge has his young daughter, Mr. Wilder his blustery, bearded grandfather, who checks off the items of the Grace Line's menu with a big flat carpenter's pencil and orders in Spanish and English so his mammoth shipboard appetite won't seem so conspicuous. Grandfather also gets mixed up with a pregnant giraffe and somebody named Carlos Murphy, two incidents which help to generate a funny book which is nevertheless several pegs below hilarity.

*THE LAND OF THE SHORTER SHADOWS. By Erle Stanley Gardner. New York: William Morrow & Co.* 1948. 228 *pp.* $5.

No one else but the famous mystery writer has written nothing else than a travel book. "The Land of the Shorter Shadows" is Baja, California, the peninsula extending south from San Diego, which is Mexican territory. Since Baja, California, is mighty rugged country, this becomes a tale of explorations by the Gardner party rather than a travel book for tourists. In the party are a geologist, a neighbor, a friend, and two of Gardner's handsome secretaries. They make the trip in two cars, one of which is a Dodge Power Wagon with eight speeds forward and a winch in front. Besides the explorations, the book, written in first-person narrative, will give you an interesting insight to Gardner's personality, home life, and the methods he employs in his "fiction factory."

## *Britain*

*THE RAILWAYS OF BRITAIN, PAST AND PRESENT. By O. S. Nock. New York: B. T. Batsford, Ltd.* 1948. 120 *pp.* $4.50.

Mr. Nock, consulting engineer to the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Co., says in his opening chapter that his book is not "purely a treatise on railway engineering and operation. To adopt such a treatment of the subject would be to present altogether too narrow a view of the railways as a national heritage. . . . There is more even than a wealth of amusement and pleasure to be derived from glimpses of railway working fifty, seventy, or a hundred years ago. Such glimpses often throw a vivid light on the customs and manners of the age, as well as giving some insight into the lives of men whose robust faith and indefatigable enterprise sponsored the early railways." Mr. Nock does just that, and the book is, strangely, quite exciting, in spots, even to non-aficionados of the iron horse.



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## PERSONAL HISTORY

(*Continued from page* 15)

hates Important People—and one has the feeling that the sea which fronts the town, the sea in its moods, and everything on it and in it, means more to Miller than any living person, except perhaps Perky. Some of his most effective writing is about the sea:

> Flaming figures of waves would arise for an instant only to be knocked back down. A pack would gang against the one, then turn about and attack each other . . . But it was not all grim. The sea merely could have gone slap-happy, jerkily nuts, under the moon's cold floodlight and, not knowing what else to do under the attention, was jumping up and down.
>
> "You gotta believe me," one jumping wave would seem to say to the other jumping waves, and then promptly fall upon its face.
>
> And there were committees in action out there, and conventions, and investigations, and staged open forums . . . and each little jump-of-a-wave appeared desperately anxious to be considered a Director of Thought. . . .

This is not typical of Miller's style. Most of the book is written with such understatement that at times it flattens into dulness. But generally he has a trick of throwing in little stories or digressions, often whimsical in a Saroyanesque manner, just when the philosophy begins to pall. And these stories and digressions make up the real charm of the book. There's a chapter on sea lions, another on surf fishermen, a gruesome discussion of the Moray eel, some amusing adventures with a ouija board, and my favorite digression on "Flippity Britches," the rabbit that dared once to be brave.

The book is held together, however, by the philosophy. It is a rather alarming and puzzling philosophy. Life, to Miller, is a pretty sad spectacle. He has seen too much of it; he has seen too much of the world; and he hates it all with a concentrated loathing which at times, unfortunately, overrides his saving grace of humor. There are bitter and disturbing passages on the stupidity of wars and the doings of Important People. There is nothing wrong with this; but what, in Miller's mind, seems to be the alternative? "There should be on the earth someplace for some of us to live which does not change every day, and where in the morning we can look out and see at least something which is still familiar." He is only occasionally bitter, but most of the book is dominated by a negative mood of nostalgia which gets one exactly no place. Or rather it gets one back to La Jolla, to the easy and comforting doings of a small town and its sea coast, to "those few precious guys"—like Perky—out of all the world who have no ambitions, no pretensions, who just live, and who therefore "seem to have the answer to so much." With frightening cynicism Miller sums up his philosophy: "As long as we have nothing with which to make comparisons we have nothing over which to feel sad." The earthworm, one would like to point out to Mr. Miller, is incapable of making comparisons, and, presumably, therefore he is happy; he does not have to feel sad.

There are positive and redeeming aspects to this philosophy. Not unreminscent of Thoreau is Miller's feeling for economy in living, for the sanity of the simple life. But on the whole Miller emerges from these essays a tragic figure, likable, puzzled, but a pretty well defeated man. His nostalgic retreat from the world lends charm to the book, but it is impossible to avoid labeling both the book and the man with that nasty word: escapist.

# The Criminal Record

***The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction***

| *Title and Author* | *Crime, Place, and Sleuth* | *Summing Up* | *Verdict* |
|---|---|---|---|
| THE DEVIL'S STRONGHOLD *Leslie Ford* (Scribner's: $2.50) | Mrs. Latham, called to Hollywood to save infatuated son, meets murder, sends for Col. Primrose, he arrives, and all is well. | Rather too-well tangled plot (it unravels neatly at end) offset by ebullient dialog, some priceless characters, and ever-delightful Mrs. L. | Smooth and satisfying |
| BLONDIE ISCARIOT *Edgar Lustgarten* (Scribner's: $2.50) | Promiscuous and power-greedy London gunmoll crosses up one big shot after another 'til she gets what she wants—and deserves. | Cheap, tawdry, and synthetic after Mr. L's masterful "One More Unfortunate" of last year. | *Quite* unfortunate |
| THE COLD COMPANION *Jack Sher* (Rinehart: $2.50) | Confused war-veteran, implicated in shooting of N. Y. theatrical agent, gets mental bugs out of system while hunting adroit slayer. | Hero's ultimate release from dead hand of childhood pal convincingly, if luridly, portrayed, amidst adventures gallant and grim in Manhattan niterys. | O. K. in tough class |
| THE ROOM UPSTAIRS *Mildred Davis* (Simon & Schuster: $2.) | Mysterious chauffeur prys into secret of auto-accident patient confined in Riverdale millionaire's home and comes up with shattering discoveries. | Mystifying, dramatic, and exciting — although heroine's death comes in "uneven pants" on one page and "quick shallow" dittos on next. | Suspantsful |
| ECHO MY TEARS *Jan Foster* (Dial: $2.50) | Young psychiatrist, digging into 12-year-old matricide by doctor's daughter, adds fuel to fires of small-town hell. | Good psychological patter, many interesting characters, cleverly placed red-herrings, and solution which, though reminiscent, carries ample conviction. | Commendable —in its class |
| THE MILKMAID'S MILLIONS *Hugh Austin* (Scribner's: $2.50) | Staid counselor Wm. Sultan and his bonny office-help get frightfully tangled in two bucolic slayings, escaping via silos and shrewd sleuthing. | Much better plotted than 1st "Sultan's Harem" tale—itself no turkey—with plenty of action, and much sly-and-dry fun. | Very good |
| SNARE FOR WITCHES *Elinor Chamberlain* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50) | Deaths and bewitchings in Mass. village, in 1663, imperil life of young medical student who scents murder and proves it. | Rule-of-thumb detecting, in pre-sleuth days, capably handled against rich background—including, however, some palpably "stock" characters. | Different |
| FOUNTAIN OF DEATH *Hugh Lawrence Nelson* (Rinehart: $2.) | Death of San Franciscan —shot, poisoned, and hit by taxi—presents Homicide Lieut. Johnson with many secretive suspects and strange motives. | Queer fish netted by Johnson and his enjoyable side-kicks supply humor, thrills, and swift action before chilly dawn brings solution. | Slightly breathless |



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# the Phoenix Nest

### THE PARSON POET

AH, would it had been my lot to know
The remarkable vicar of Morwenstowe,
Where from Eagle Crag to the rocks below
Clung coombe and village of Morwenstowe,
Where a Celtic dialect once was spoke
And the gods are good to the Cornish folk—
Would God it had been my lot to know
The antiquary of Morwenstowe!

He lived in a coign of the coombe, of course,
'Twixt winey heather and guinea-gold gorse.
He led nine cats for to hear him preach
'Mid cobles and nets on the pebbly beach.
In a long-tailed coat of the claret hue
And a fisherman's jersey rough and blue,
He'd a small red cross patched over the place
Where Our Lord was pierced for the human race,
And of love and of pain it was woven full—
But the vicar's socks were of black sheep's wool!
On his pate sate a brimless beaver hat
As pink as the face that was under that,
And though scorning the shears of the London tailors
He'd gold to bury all shipwrecked sailors;
And he perched as naked as any nail
With a seaweed wig and an oilskin tail
On rocks, for a jest, to attest the permanency there of a real live merman!

Also we know he gave his benison
To tall black-elflocked Alfred Tennyson,
Parleying with him in proper pride
On all the myths of the countryside,
Of smugglers' revels gone corybantic
And midnight wrecks in the wild Atlantic,
Orating the same in cavernous nooks,
And piling his arms with Arthurian books—
The parson whose throat-thundering cry
Is still, "And shall Trelawny die!"
The sturdy walker, fabulous talker,
The poet whose name is Stephen Hawker,
Who junkets still, a belovèd ghost,
On the howling heath of the Cornish coast;
Whose mind and spirit were ever agile
To view archangels or build Tintagel;
The Magdalen man who, with zeal of the Gael,
Retold the tale of the strange Sangreal;
Bright reliquary of doughty fable
And wizards and knights around Arthur's table . . .

Woe worth my life, that I never could know
The wonderful vicar of Morwenstowe!

W. R. B.

* * *

To: The Phoenix Nest.

FROM: (Mrs.) Mary Ellen Lewis, Librarian,
State Teachers College,
Kutztown, Pa.

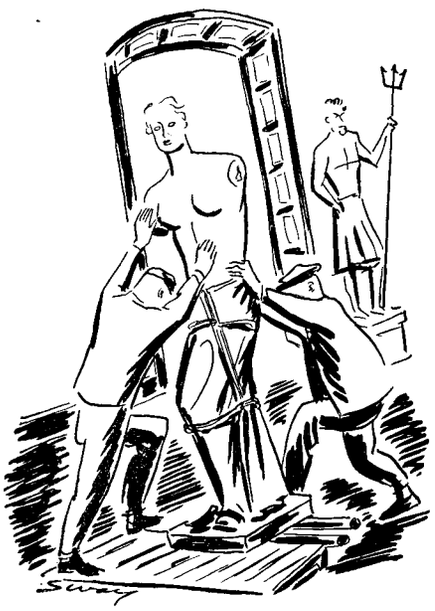
DATE: August 18, 1948.

SUBJECT: The MISplacement of autographs in books.

Why do authors invariably autograph their books on the inconsequential flyleaf?

Autographed books are things of beauty and joys forever to their owners, and are used frequently in book talks and book exhibits. It bespeaks much more if the interest of the title page is enhanced by the personal signature of the author rather than having the autograph placed on the otherwise cold, blank, flyleaf where writers of books will place it every time if left to their own.

Could you call the attention of authors to this annoying habit of theirs —or am I the only one it annoys?



Today, in the midst of political campaigns, let us remember a great American. The following poem comes from that stronghold of Republicanism, the State of Maine:

**F. D. R.**

Sundial, flowers where the Hudson flowing flows
out of today to reach tomorrow's ocean
which spreads the greatness of the sun by its
reflection of true planetary warmth
know but the mortal dust, the man lives on
through triumph over death to shape his dream
from clay of humankind that we should mold
our way of life; American, but not
America's alone, for through the clear,
concerted vision of his heart and soul
high councils, universal, shaped his mind
where world democracy shines as the sun
shines on the dial where far shadows lengthen
to rays of peace his being helps to strengthen.

LOTON ROGERS PITTS.

* * *

### OFFICE FABLES

A secretary long ago
(Doubtless in the Land of Oz)
Said, "He's in conference."
And oh,
Whaddye know?
The so-and-so
*Was.*

ETHEL JACOBSON.

* * *

I thank Edward L. McKenna, of the University of Pennsylvania, for the following:

> You write affectionately and accurately about Henry Cuyler Bunner. He had a fine and delicate tallent. He was not Saki, perhaps, but he was quite close to Francois Coppée—maybe better than Coppée, although Coppée was fine, when he was not too saccharine.
>
> Mr. Bunner was a friend of my father. My father worked as a bookkeeper for Richard V. Harnett, and used to contribute to *Puck* and the other light magazines of the day. Mr. Bunner was editor of *Puck* (this was about 1890 or so). He had lived in France, as no doubt you know. He wore a Van Dyke, and he carried a stick. Mr. Harnett was the auctioneer for Tammany Hall. Mr. Bunner came over to see my father. Harnett went back, and said, "Hey, Bill, there is some dude out there looking for you. Name is Bunner." "My God!" my father said. "That is the editor of *Puck!*" *Puck* was a Democratic paper; *Judge* was a Republican paper. Mr. Harnett said, "*He is?* Go on, get your coat, Bill; stay out with him all afternoon, don't come back today!" My father's



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particular friends were Charles Gibson (not Charles Dana Gibson!), Harry Leon Wilson, Rose O'Neill, and Booth Tarkington. We had many of Miss O'Neill's pictures, and two by Glackens.

Years ago, Miss Willa Roberts, of *Woman's Home Companion,* bought a story from me. She said, "You may not like the comparison, but this might almost have been written by Henry Cuyler Bunner." I wrote back, "No, Miss Roberts, but I thank you sincerely, just the same." Mr. Bunner died in 1896, when I was three, but he was in my father's house many times—Henry George was a friend of my father, too, and the great James L. Ford ("The Literary Shop," and "Forty-odd Years in the Literary Shop"). My father left nothing but fugitive material, and neither shall I. Mr. Ford used to say, "Two rhymes to the quatrain, that's enough; don't spoil the market!" Thomas Augustine Daly here in Philadelphia is a good friend of mine, and a good poet, too. He has a passionate, bilious hatred for Walt Whitman. My pet hate is Emerson. I said, "He was the Doctor Frank Crane of his day," and I wasn't far off the target either.

It is nice to have a literary magazine that makes some sense, Mr. Benét. I have a friend, a newsdealer at Fifteenth and Market, who always saves it for me. Of course, he does a lot more business with *Racing Form!*

By the way, I don't teach English—don't think that badly of the University. I teach insurance at the Wharton School—all kinds of insurance: life insurance, property insurance, marine insurance, casualty insurance, sure, sure, sure! Oh, by the way. The *best* writer of light stories, like Bunner—Henri Duvernois. For tough stories, Pierre Mille. For tough novels, Claude Farrere ("Les Civilisées"). I thought one time I might translate that, but you could no more translate it than that volume five of Brantôme.

* * *

**TRAVELOGUE**

They say that travel broadens one,
And now, whichever way one looks
At me, I'm broad. I got that way
Sitting reading travel books!

F. B. TOULMIN.

* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 753))

GERALD BULLETT:
*GEORGE ELIOT*
[HER LIFE AND BOOKS]

*My soul never flourishes on attention to details that others can manage quite gracefully without any conscious loss of power for wider thoughts and cares. Before we began to move I was swimming in Comte . . . ; now I am sitting in puddles.

*From a letter written to Charles Lewes, son of George Lewes, and his first wife, on his twenty-first birthday.

# The New Recordings

| COMPOSITION, PERFORMER ALBUM NUMBER. NUMBER OF RECORDS | ENGINEERING | | PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Recording Technique* | *Surface* | |
| GLAZOUNOFF, FROM THE MIDDLE AGES. (1903). Indianapolis Symphony, Sevitsky. RCA Victor DM 1222 (3) | A fine recording, alive, expansive. Good tonal range and sharpness of detail, warm liveness. | A+ | A lush-colored late-Romantic work; opens part Brahms, part Tchaikowsky, goes on to a touch of Rimsky and Moussorgsky. Not overheavy. |
| DVORAK, HUSITSKA OV. SMETANA, THE MOLDAU. Boston Pops Orch., Fiedler. RCA Victor DM 1210 (3) | Husitska seems better than Moldau—diff. in musical texture? Both are excellent, good tonal range, could be wider. | A+ | Husitska is big, tragic overture, not unlike the "Tragic" of Brahms but more impetuous, dramatic. It's a good piece of its kind. |
| DVORAK, SLAVONIC DANCES (arr. Szell). Cleveland Orchestra, Szell. Columbia MM 756 (3) | Terrific ultra-wide-range cymbals almost every beat—a stunning job, quite literally! | A | Ecstatic playing of rather too noisy but still musical arrangements by Szell. Five of them. |

## THE LP PICKUP — WHAT WILL THE PUBLIC TAKE?

THE Columbia LP (long playing) record is officially complemented by the Columbia-Philco LP record player, and many of us have assumed that, as a team, the record and its pickup would reflect similar characteristics. Unfortunately this is not the fact. The LP record at its best has a wide tonal range that extends easily to 10,000 cycles, with extremely low distortion and very low surface noise—those being the chief difficulties with wide-range recording. The LP player, on the other hand, is designed, I understand, to cut off all higher tones above about 6,000 cycles, not because of engineering or economic difficulties but evidently *as a matter of policy;* because Philco apparently believes that 6,000 cycles is all the public will take.

This is important for us consumers because it represents two familiar attitudes in this and other industries. Reflections of the same viewpoints are appearing elsewhere in the blossoming microgroove field—a number of manufacturers are to offer LP players with pickups that cut off at the abysmally low figure of 4,000 cycles (and these in the plush department too). On the other hand, the well-known Astatic company has a reasonably priced LP pickup and arm which will give good reproduction of the *full* LP tonal range, the best the records have to offer. A Pickering LP cartridge is available (interchangeable with the standard Pickering) with extremely high performance standards, and no doubt other high-quality units will follow, not necessarily at great cost either.

The argument as to what we the public will "take" is hardly new. What is new is that in the microgroove field, for once there are no complications; a pickup with limited range is so limited purely and simply because of policy decision, *not because of inherent physical limitation.* Price has little to do with it.

Why, one may ask, does Columbia bother to make high-quality records, if Columbia's own player cannot reproduce that quality? Why should anyone bother with high-quality components—when, admittedly, the phonograph chain is as strong as its weakest link, and most existing equipment in the public's hands is full of weak links?

Because, first, it is human nature, even in big business, to put out the best product possible. And second (hard-headedly) because the mousetrap proverb may be calculated to work in the long run. The *arbitrary* limitation of tonal range in these new pickups, the introduction of a deliberately weakened link, impedes progress because it makes progress impossible. Fortunately there will be much good LP equipment soon on the market and let's hope that Columbia lives up to its own promise and provides a cartridge for the Columbia player that can equal the records. With two good links out of a possible four—the battle is almost won!

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.



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(*Continued on page 34*)



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## PERSONALS

(Continued from page 33)

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## PERSONALS

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## PERSONALS

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# DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 754

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

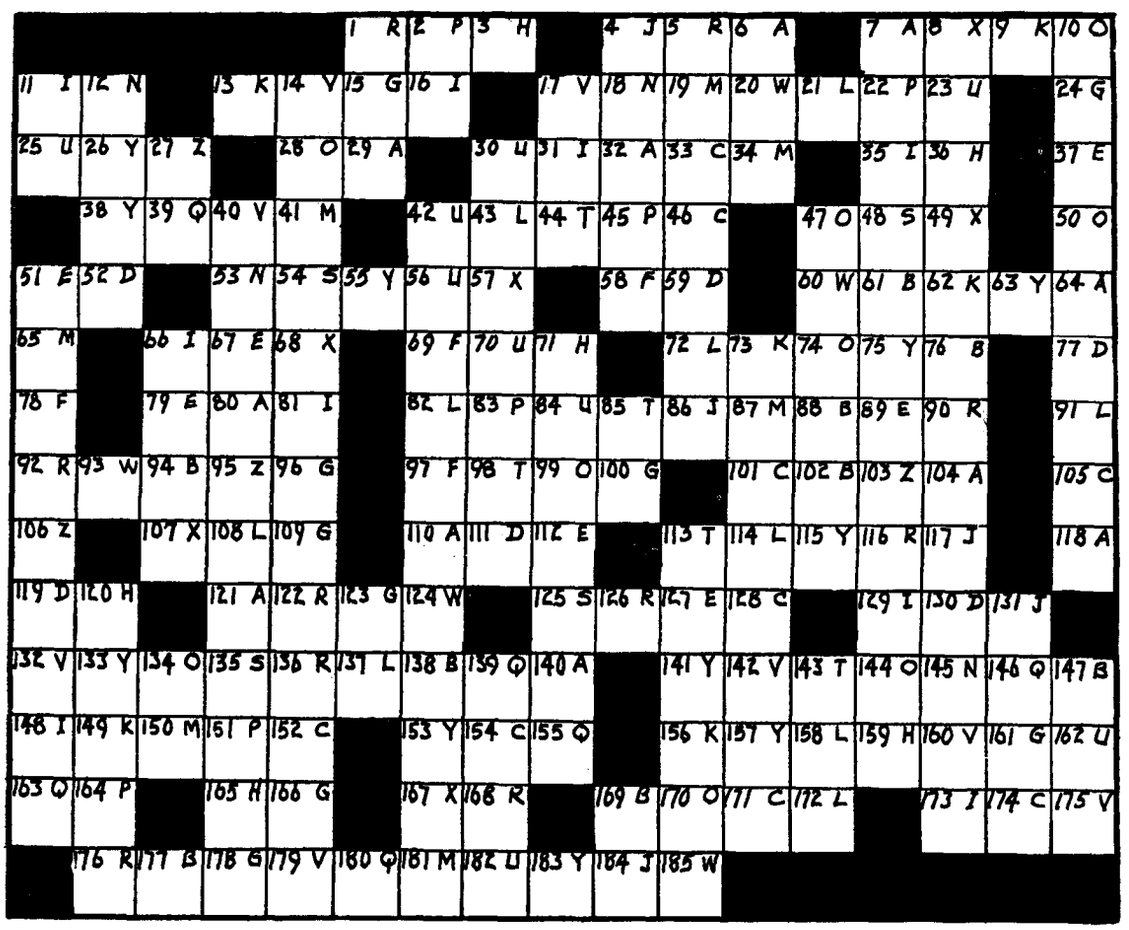
Reg. U. S. Patent Office

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| A. To make oneself conspicuous (3 wds.; colloq.). | 7 32 29 118 121 140 110 104 80 6 64 |
| B. A thicket composed of shrubs and small trees. | 138 177 147 76 102 169 88 61 94 |
| C. Much and idle talk. | 171 101 154 128 174 33 105 152 46 |
| D. A non-Christian Malayan native (P. I.). | 77 119 59 130 52 111 |
| E. The language of the Aztecs. | 67 37 51 89 127 79 112 |
| F. A kind of two-masted vessel with spritsails used by the Danes, Dutch, etc. | 97 58 69 78 |
| G. Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, 1796-99. | 178 123 15 109 100 166 96 24 161 |
| H. Soaked or exposed to moisture, as timber, flax, etc. | 71 36 3 165 159 120 |
| I. Morbid dislike of home. | 81 148 11 16 129 31 35 173 66 |
| J. General, Mexican War; Whig candidate defeated by Pierce in 1852. | 131 184 4 117 86 |
| K. One of the Gorgons (Gr. myth.). | 156 149 13 62 9 73 |
| L. A foot of three syllables, *middle* one long, others short (Pros.). | 108 158 72 43 21 114 91 137 82 172 |
| M. Put forth as a natural product. | 65 150 87 181 41 19 34 |
| N. "Let it remain" (printing direction of something erased, etc.). | 53 12 18 145 |
| O. Mirthless. | 170 10 47 99 144 50 28 134 74 |
| P. The external world or object of knowledge (Latin; Phil.). | 22 151 45 2 164 83 |
| Q. Woman guillotined in French Revolution ("O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!"). | 146 39 139 180 163 155 |
| R. One of the Graces (Gr. myth.). | 122 116 176 126 136 168 90 1 5 92 |
| S. A child; young of an animal (Fr.). | 125 48 54 135 |
| T. Inserted as additional material (2 wds.; printing). | 85 113 143 44 98 |
| U. The heaviness of goods (as bales of wool) when taken from the warehouse. | 70 84 42 30 182 162 23 25 56 |
| V. Kept at a distance by force or craft (2 wds.). | 175 160 142 179 14 40 17 132 |
| W. To overlay with other metal. | 60 20 93 124 185 |
| X. King of England, 1272-1307, called "Longshanks". | 57 167 107 8 49 68 |
| Y. The "battle above the clouds" (U. S. Civil War, Nov. '63). | 141 153 133 63 75 55 183 157 115 38 26 |
| Z. British poet laureate, 1692. | 106 103 27 95 |

## DIRECTIONS

*To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the DEFINITIONS each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.*

*When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).*




**Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 32 of this issue.**



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# *"WHAT'S BENNETT CERF GOT THAT WE HAVEN'T?"*

## demanded **JACK LAIT** and **LEE MORTIMER,** authors of **"NEW YORK CONFIDENTIAL"**

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"An unorthodox guide, and a lively one, a survey of behind-the scenes skulduggeries practiced upon starry-eyed ladies and trusting gentlemen who come to New York with the pollen dust of alfalfa in their hair. There are instructions on how to have a good time (with or without one's spouse). . . . Among the olio of tales, anecdotes, admonitions, and reminiscences, there appear pictures, drawn with realistic comprehension which are damning commentaries upon our social blindness, our political dumbness, our moral deafness."

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